

CONFOUND THEIR POLITICS

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PREFACE.

THERE is no inspired message to be found in the pages of this small book; nor even any novel doctrine. Probably there is not one single new idea in it, although such ideas as there are have been formed independently.

The views of a very ordinary man would not appear to have much interest for a busy generation. They are set forth because it is believed by the author that similar ideas are held by a large majority of his fellow-countrymen; and that such views, drowned by the clamour of noisy politicians obsessed by partisanship, do not receive sufficient consideration from those who have the welfare of the country in their hands.

Among those in high places, there are, no doubt, many who are Britons first and politicians after; and if the interest of some of these is aroused, the purpose of the writer is more than achieved.

A. C. HILLS.

June 10th, 1916.

CONFOUND THEIR POLITICS



PUBLIC SPIRIT

WHEN these notes were commenced, some time before the war, they opened with the question :
Is the great British spirit which built up our wonderful Empire as strong to-day as in the past ?

The magnificent response to the nation's call now makes such a question superfluous. Thank Heaven, the Briton is still a patriot at heart, as well as a great fighter.

In view of how much has been done, it would seem an ungracious task to suggest the doing of still more. But the same *apparent* lack of natural vigour (since proved by events so convincingly not to exist, as far as fighting for one's own liberties and country is concerned), the seeming apathy and lack of thoroughness in dealing with grave problems, which caused the question referred to above, still appears to prevail on other matters than war. Whilst the national spirit is still active, I would like to see these other matters dealt with also.

The British spirit does not apply to fighting alone. It implies a sturdy opposition to tyranny in any form ; love of justice and truth ; commonsense ; business ability ; and dislike of cant or humbug. I would like to see the same evidence forthcoming on these points as on the score of practical patriotism. Why

not? The qualities are there; it is only through the growth of some minor defects in the national character that they are not more exercised.

Robert Louis Stevenson referred to "fatty degeneration of the intellect" as a possible complaint in those who were very happily married. As a nation we have been just a bit too prosperous and comfortable in the past—too much addicted to the fireside-and-slippers, can't-be-bothered frame of mind. Consequently, certain things have crept in till they have almost been accepted as customary instead of being vigorously combated. The faddists and extremists have had it too much their own way.

We British always muddle through. It seems to be a profound belief with the great majority that all will come right in the end—somehow—and that no serious disaster can ever befall us. If history does not lie, that belief has brought down more nations in the past than any other cause.

Why should we have to muddle through at all? It is hardly a credit to us, as a nation, and does not testify to our solid, practical, British commonsense, or to our wisdom.

"Happy the nation that has no history"—and history is prevented by foresight, prompt action, moral courage; by providing against possible dangers in good time; in a word, by statesmanship and public spirit. I do not see enough of that spirit to-day in our leaders. There would seem to be very few who put patriotism in the foremost place, or who take a hilltop view of great questions affecting the national welfare. Party and personal considerations, the possible loss of a few votes, appear to outweigh all else; till, in the

view of the ordinary person, politics seem to be the curse of the country. Such a spirit is bad enough in times of peace. But, when the very existence of the Empire is at stake, I hold that any one of our leaders who considers party interests, or anything whatever but the safety of the nation at large, is guilty of treachery to his charge.

There seems to be in our legislators a halting, hesitating spirit, and a tendency to let things drift, to "wait and see"; in a word, the canker of *laissez-faire* (or "Birrellism"—the result of which we have already seen by waiting in Ireland), resulting in namby-pamby, half-hearted handling of any subject, and then only under the whip of pressure. Yet never had any Government a more solid backing, and never was there a more united people, ready to welcome strong, capable leadership.

With a firm Government in power, little would be heard of anti-conscriptionists, stop-the-war leagues, conscientious objectors, or strikers in war-time. Neither should we have gone for nearly two years before being able to decide whether universal service was necessary or not. In these and similar matters—such, for example, as the treatment of the spy question and that of Zeppelin raids—there has been a lack of that firm handling and commonsense thoroughness displayed by our Allies.

But an active public spirit, and a wide outlook, are due also from the people who are ruled; both now, and after the war. If this is not forthcoming, the inefficient, self-seekers, fanatics and little men will continue to mismanage and misrepresent. I repeat that the public spirit is there; but it should be *displayed*—the traditional apathy must be overcome more often than it is.

It is idle for us merely to blame our rulers. The people also have responsibilities. A practical illustration of this is at our door in the case of the German people.

Admitting that they have been led by false guides to believe that might is right ; admitting also that the war was brought about in the first instance by the military party led by a vain madman (happy for us that he is not a Napoleon), who imagined that he combined in himself all the qualities of Bismarck, Von Moltke, and Von Roon, I still submit that the war would not have been possible, that the pinchbeck Alexander would have been kept in check, if the German people generally, the great commercial classes and so forth, had not been led away by desire for German supremacy in the markets of the world. The spirit which prompted the toast of " Der Tag " in the German Navy was very generally reflected in the conversation and bearing of the middle classes in Germany before the war, as I have seen in the course of various business visits there.

Our national fault is not like theirs ; but the parallel holds good. We desired no war, we lusted for no other country's possessions. But we allowed the war to become possible through slackness, over-confidence, mental sloth—call it what one may—through not insisting on efficiency and public spirit in our leaders.

Have we not seen in modern times a great and brave nation go under—temporarily, it now happily appears—simply through unpreparedness, and the lack of efficient leadership ? What happened to France in 1870 might just as easily have happened to us in 1914.

Statesmanship and public spirit (if, indeed, the two are not identical) would prepare, in advance, against other dangers than war. The future of a great Empire

depends on many things besides self-preservation against powerful foes ; and we should no more muddle through on matters of national health, national trade, and such vital questions than we should on matters of national defence.

The same firm handling that is necessary in the conduct of a great war is required in connection with these matters. There are things almost equally vital to winning the war—though they may affect the future of the Empire more than the present—which need dealing with *now*, if harm is to be prevented, and if we are to reap the benefit of victory. It is the spirit which provides for the future that we want to see more displayed by people and legislators alike.

Such matters as the settlement of the nation's trading policy, and the organisation to provide for the return to civil life of some three or four million men, so that those who have given their all shall not suffer unduly for their patriotism, cannot be left over till the war is ended. It will be too late then.

The man in the street is no fool. His judgment is sound, though it may take time for it to make itself felt ; and it is for him—for the great inarticulate majority—I would endeavour to speak. For those others, friends of every country but their own, the "anti's" on every national subject, whose main idea of running a great Empire seems to be, to quote a well-known publicist, "the giving away of one's friends in the hope of conciliating one's enemies," no brief is necessary. Already they receive too much attention.

Naturally these views of mine, should they gain any publicity at all, will bring forth an avalanche of diverse views, including many arguments which are—to a plain

man—apparently unanswerable. But it is only the *essentials* with which I am concerned. These are older than the nations ; and all the arguments, or new or advanced theories in the world cannot change them. Since civilisation first began to evolve from savagery, it has been accepted that good citizenship, in the widest meaning of the term, is among the first of the virtues. Whatever controversy there may be as to details, there can be no question about such simple principles as loyalty to one's own people, the preservation of law and order, equal justice for all, and the rights of the state or community as opposed to the rights of the individual.

PATRIOTISM

“ Our country ! In our intercourse with foreign nations may she always be in the right ; but our country right or wrong.”

TO my way of thinking, this sentiment forms in itself the finest religion. It is no question of blind, unreasoning partisanship. We may feel that our country is in the wrong on any question, without any disloyalty or lack of patriotism. Our duty in such case is to use our best endeavours towards a change of view ; to get our people on the side we consider right, whilst there is yet time. But, in time of war, one can only be for or against. There can be no middle course.

Yet many apparently well-meaning people, either from vanity in desiring to appear superior to the common herd, or from some mental “kink,” still hold to-day, or profess to hold, views which, in older and blunter times, would have led them to the scaffold as traitors. It is a pity that the word has fallen into disuse. The spread of education—good thing in the main that it is—has been responsible for much loose reasoning and warped ideas. It appears to be very easy in a semi-educated mind, with a smattering of general information, and a tendency towards original thinking, to lose the value of essentials ; and especially to ignore the wisdom of our forefathers.

I am no reactionary nor blind believer in the old days. In many respects we have improved upon the old days. But it is wise to remember that some of the older ideas have not lost their value, and are incapable of replacement by modern substitutes. Truth, courage, loyalty, love of country, public spirit—all these

have in no way altered or lost their meaning ; though sometimes the fact appears to be forgotten.

Do we not, in the inner hearts of all of us, devoutly believe that our nation, as a nation, is the best ? I think little of the man who does not. Yet patriotism is apparently out of fashion—a word never to be used. Before the war the sneer of Jingoism, the reference to music-hall sentiment, seemed sufficient to kill it ; and even to-day there would seem to be many who fear to refer to it. Why ? Surely there is nothing nobler than true patriotism—the love of one's country, of one's own kith and kin ? Even the music-hall brand of patriotism is better by far than none at all.

Not long before the war, at a debate on Conscription, organised by a certain London club, a would-be superior person (no doubt merely posing) announced, in the course of an argument against the necessity for national service, that it did not matter to him “ whether King George or Kaiser Wilhelm ruled this country, as his business would go on just the same, and he expected he would have to pay about the same rates and taxes.” Was he kicked, or ever afterwards cut by his fellow members ? In healthier and more vigorous times, he would have been howled down and made to eat his words. In these mealy-mouthed and polite days he passed practically unanswered ; though it is quite certain that, inwardly, the majority of his listeners strongly resented his attitude.* The fear of being considered theatrical or old-fashioned apparently kept them quiet. It is that sort of lack of moral courage which, I think, is not to our national credit.

[* NOTE.—The person referred to here is now cheerfully wearing khaki.—AUTHOR.]

The spectacle of certain members of Parliament, whose publicly-expressed sentiments are in total opposition to the oath of allegiance to which they have subscribed, sitting in the House and interfering in our affairs, is nauseous to the ordinary decent citizen. If the oath is not intended to be regarded seriously, let us do away with it. Whilst we have a King and Constitution, those professing Republicanism, Socialists, or open talkers of sedition, are out of place in our councils, and to allow them to remain, not daring to repeat there what they say outside, is an insult to the nation.

That there should always be in every country or community a certain percentage of people whose objects are entirely selfish, and whose views are narrow and perverted—who, in a word, are lacking in public spirit—appears to be inevitable. I honestly believe that the proportion is smaller with us than in other countries. But, with us, such people appear to obtain a greater prominence than their number and influence would warrant. As a patriotic Briton, proud of my country, and believing that the great majority is sound at heart, I resent that an insignificant minority should have so much power to give a false impression to the outer world.

It is possible to treat such with contempt in ordinary times—though even that principle may be carried too far, as witness the late Keir Hardie's visit to India—but in time of war the only course is to put them first in the firing line. Nothing else is so likely to quickly bring them to a healthy point of view, and to see things as they are.

A COMMONSENSE NATIONAL VIEWPOINT

IF there is one virtue above others which as a nation we pride ourselves on possessing, it is sound, rugged, practical commonsense. There are a few matters which we have allowed to exist, or to creep in, with which it would be well to deal, if we desire other peoples to hold the same valuation of our national wisdom as we do.

There seems a lack of "snap" in the conduct of our national affairs. In these days of rapid change and continual evolution, we dare not stand still or adhere to obsolete methods. If a little of the organising power, adaptability in emergencies, and ready, practical resource of our French friends—the spirit which causes them to *do* things whilst we are thinking about them—is grafted on to our more solid British qualities as the result of fighting shoulder to shoulder, the *Entente Cordiale* will prove a fine thing indeed.

The question of National Defence, of course, stands out prominently.

The richest Empire in the world—in possessions at least, if not in actual wealth—we ignored the obvious fact that the cheapest form of national insurance is to be safe from attack. Whilst other nations grew in power, whilst Germany built up a huge fleet with coal-bunkers for the North Sea only, we allowed word-twisting, hair-splitting politicians to jeopardise our very existence, by cutting down our defences on the score of economy or other pleas. We left our Navy and Army in the hands of amateurs, to be tinkered with

and experimented almost out of existence—our Army with a lawyer at its head (whilst a Kitchener was practically shelved), and our great Navy under an ex-Army man, whose previous experience was chiefly of the journalistic order.

I have no criticism to make of the two gentlemen particularly referred to, who are, no doubt, able enough in their own proper spheres. The point is that they were not experts.

In ordinary affairs, we should not place the control of a commercial undertaking, a manufactory, or the construction of a bridge or important building, in the hands of anyone who had not had a life-long training—that is, of one who was not an expert in the particular work concerned. Still less should it be thought wise to leave the safety of a nation in the hands of amateurs. Brilliant as these may be, it is obvious that the requirements and details of a great navy, or of an army, cannot be learned in a year or two.

I submit that such matters as our defences and our trade should be entirely apart from the passing politics of the moment, and should be entirely in the hands of trained experts.

Never was a great empire so vulnerable as ours. Spread, as it is, over the whole globe, it is practically held together by prestige—and coaling stations. It is only natural that these links, invaluable and irreplaceable, should be ardently desired by growing rivals. The ordinary man, or even the average M.P., cannot possibly be a sound judge on such questions as whether four or forty battleships are necessary; whether an enlisted army can replace the national service in vogue in other countries; whether our

Gibraltars and Maltas throughout the Empire are beyond all possibility of loss (the withdrawal of our fleet from the Mediterranean was certainly disquieting), and so forth. These are for the highest procurable experts, of *proved* efficiency, with motives beyond suspicion. A politician is guided by many considerations. Those who have the safety and the future prosperity of a great Empire in their keeping should have that one object only in view, and should be specially fitted to carry it out.

Apart from the main question of national defence, such matters as allowing Germans to penetrate so largely, not only our commercial and financial, but our political systems—even to becoming M.P.'s and Privy Councillors—allowing foreigners to become pilots in our home waters; neglecting our food supply; ignoring very pressing and vital questions affecting the national health; and permitting our manufactures to be filched from us through adherence to an obsolete policy, do not, on the surface, appear to be great proofs of commonsense.

Then as to Ireland. In the midst of all the confusion and difficulty surrounding the question, one plain issue stands out clearly. Is the majority of the Irish population loyal to the British Empire or disloyal?

Until that question is determined, a firm Government would treat Ireland as a part of the British Empire. The same laws, obligations, and privileges that are good enough for England, Scotland, and Wales should be good enough for Ireland. Instead we have seen continual tinkering legislation, which has not suited any party or faction; and we have seen Ireland exempted from military service, presumably because those in authority are afraid.

I have yet to be convinced that the majority of the Irish people are disloyal. That can only be established by a Referendum, which must be so conducted that the lower classes shall absolutely believe in its secrecy. Should the fact be so established, and as the result, provided national safety permits, Ireland be given a separate entity, I submit that she must not look to British taxpayers for any support whatever. Any other suggestion is an insult to the intelligence of the rest of the Empire.

It did not, to many of us, appear a very wise policy to cut down Woolwich Arsenal, and allow many of the hands to be snapped up by Germany, or to let die for lack of orders a battleship-building firm like the Thames Ironworks Company.

Compared with the very thorough measures adopted by France and Russia, for instance, our method of dealing with the spy question appears to be childish to other nations. Even though the charge may be true that we as a nation do not appear to grasp what "being at war" really means, it is hardly a testimony to our wisdom to allow thousands of Germans and Austrians to roam about almost unchecked, and to pursue their avocations to the disadvantage of our own people. It seems to me that a wise nation would automatically institute martial law on the outbreak of war. Certainly it would not allow enemy aliens—especially of the German type—to remain in our Government departments, or have anything to do with preparing the national food. There are far too many doubtful foreigners in East-end bakehouses to-day for one's peace of mind.

In our social system, despite the ever-growing menace of Syndicalism or misapplied Socialism, and the experi-

ence of other countries in that connection, we have contented ourselves with simply ignoring the subject, instead of taking active steps to counteract the evil by instilling sound views in our younger generation. The making of good citizens should be our greatest consideration if we care for the future at all. In many ways our method is topsy-turvy. Whilst the welfare of the criminal classes receives considerable attention, our honest, hardworking, deserving poor, if times be bad, may starve with impunity. Surely the object should be to encourage thrift, industry, and keeping the law, to the very utmost of our ability. That would seem to be the commonsense way.

The same general criticism which applies to the Army and Navy holds good throughout—we want experts in charge of each department, not amateurs. A Chancellor of the Exchequer should be a trained financier, with a thorough grasp of business conditions. A lawyer cannot possibly be expected to know what loss and dislocation, what far-reaching and unexpected effects, may result from an apparently simple imposition. The Board of Trade should have at its head a thorough business man; the Foreign Office a diplomat of lifelong experience in all the principal foreign capitals; and so on throughout our system.

Even in the conduct of matters directly connected with our part of the war, we have not exactly shone on the score of wisdom. It has taken nearly two years of the greatest war in the world's history to decide whether or not national service was necessary. We have seen leading politicians squabbling over how many shells were necessary; also as to whether or not drink was the cause of the shortage. We have enlisted married men who support wives and families,

leaving single men, who support nobody but themselves, to do the work at home. We have allowed the skilled workers in munition factories to be sent out to the trenches, only to be brought back again later.

Though we have had ample enough proof of the disgraceful treatment of our men in German prisons, we have been able to do nothing. Nobody desires us to smirch ourselves as a nation by "reprisals." There is a difference, however, between that extreme course and following the French lead. Their action has apparently had good results, even though it is admitted that the French prisoners were not treated quite so badly as the specially-hated British. Is there any logical objection to putting German officers on exactly the same pay as British officers receive in Germany? Is it not idiotic to let German officers have a good time, whilst our own captured have such a bad one? It is not suggested that we should starve or beat the prisoners in our hands; but the absurd sentiment which, in view of all the circumstances, permits a Donington Hall is not calculated to leave a nice feeling in the minds of those who are fighting for us, still less so in the minds of those who are prisoners abroad, or to promote the respect of our Allies.

Have we not enough backbone to tell Germany plainly that in the final reckoning she will be held accountable to the last jot for such outrages against humanity and international law; and to remove in the meantime all privileges or luxuries from the prisoners in our hands, until the lot of our own men is improved?

Again, we are paying in wages for the manufacture of our munitions several times as much as any other nation. I don't grudge the workers their good time, but as one of that unfortunate class called on for the

most taxation proportionately, and least able to bear it, I certainly do not view the future Budgets with so much equanimity as I otherwise might. Above all, after months of talk about organisation, no serious effort has yet been made to organise the whole nation.

The question of efficiency, which means in effect the employment of experts instead of amateurs in every department of the national service, is one that raises many varied and difficult questions. There is a very prevalent idea, which is general to a really remarkable extent, that there are "too many lawyers" in control of our affairs. That idea, if traced to its source, is only the outcome of our neglect of such a policy. A lawyer is only an expert in his own business, which is the interpretation of the law; he cannot be also an expert in war, commerce, and everything else.

I have no objection to legal gentlemen as such. Some of my very best friends are numbered amongst them, and I know many who yield to none in their patriotism, dislike of trickiness, and other qualities which are sometimes hastily included as the attributes only of those outside the legal profession.

The fixed principle that those who administer the laws should have nothing to do with the making of them would seem to be logically sound. In business circles it is not usual for the cashier to draw up his own system of keeping accounts, or to audit his own books. On the other hand, the principle of keeping lawyers out of politics, assuming that any law could possibly be framed which would achieve that result, would lose us the services of a splendid patriot like Sir Edward Carson, to take one instance alone.

In other matters than politics, however, I think our legal profession should be more utilised than at present.

In those cases that are usually dealt with by the "great unpaid" absolute knowledge is necessary, in greater degree probably than in any other walk of life. Even at risk of hurting the feelings of some very estimable gentlemen with J.P. after their name, every case, no matter how trivial, should be tried by a trained lawyer. Especially does this apply to small county court matters. The fees, even if nominal, would be a welcome and very legitimate addition to the income of many struggling to gain a footing in the profession, and so forth, and the training would be excellent.

We should then have a wider field for selection of judges and other officials in the higher branches of the profession.

I have not dwelt on the very obvious confusion and many mistakes arising out of our hasty raising of a huge army, and the consequent necessity of adopting at the last moment the principle of universal military service. These errors were unavoidable under our system of not doing things *beforehand*, and only prove the contention that such vital matters should be in the hands of experts.

Considering all the original conditions, wonders have been done. But still more would have been done had our national system been right. The things I have mentioned are only a few of those in the mind of ninety-nine out of every hundred ordinary men one meets. But the sum total goes to prove something wrong in our methods, and to show the vital necessity of our King's exhortation on return from his trip abroad—"Wake up, England!"

DEFENCE—NOT DEFIANCE

IT is very easy to be wise after the event. We are possibly now beginning to appreciate how very costly economy in national defences can prove to be.

The mere financial loss is, of course, as nothing to the sacrifice of thousands of the very flower of our manhood, the agony and suffering of a whole Empire, which is the real cost of our economy. That cannot be reckoned.

A few extra millions a year spent in maintaining an adequate army would, in most people's estimation, have prevented the war altogether, or at any rate postponed it for many years. What it will cost, all told, when the loss of business and dislocation of the ordinary machinery of the nation is added to the actual war bill, is beyond the average mind to grasp. It is a platitude that preparedness against attack is the cheapest form of insurance. That a professedly practical and business people should have ignored the obvious fact in the past is bad enough. The question now is, will the folly be repeated in the future?

We cannot afford to allow sentimentalists and theorists to again risk our national existence. The people who, ignoring hard facts, suggest universal disarmament and the setting other nations a good example, would not be satisfied, in dealing with a man-eating tiger, with kid gloves and a squirt filled with rose-water. Obviously nothing better can be imagined than universal disarmament. But, unfortunately, the millennium has not yet arrived, and whilst human nature is what it

is—and there is as much human nature to the square inch amongst nations as there is amongst individuals—the only way to keep our end up is to remove the temptation to attack us.

The great question of universal service (or conscription), as against voluntary service, will still have to be dealt with by the nation as a whole when the present great war is over. In future we must have an adequate army, and it will be for the experts to say whether it can be raised without recourse to universal service.

Assuming, however, that when the war is over the old and apparently deep-rooted prejudice against universal national service still has sufficient power to prevail, it should surely be easy to maintain an adequate army if the matter is approached in a practical, businesslike way.

A trained professional army of the necessary magnitude to provide against future possibilities would obviously cost, in addition to the navy, too much for even the British Empire to bear as a permanent expense.

Fortunately, the Territorials have shown us what they can do, and here would appear to be the solution of the problem ready to hand. An ample Territorial force, well trained and well found, and supplementing a regular standing army of moderate proportions, would seem to fill the bill. But to make it ample, and to keep it efficient, a very different method must be adopted from that prevailing in the past.

It has been a mystery to me how a practical people, professedly desirous of avoiding conscription, and having at disposal anything up to a million of public-spirited, self-sacrificing citizens as an alternative to conscription, should fail to make the most of such an

opportunity. Instead we have seen the Volunteers—and later on the Territorials—snubbed and ignored, left with obsolete weapons, expected to bear practically all their own expenses, and treated generally as if they were asking a favour in being allowed to train and go through the hard work of getting “fit” for military work, instead of spending their spare time in cricket, golf, or other amusements.

To the plain mind, the simplest course would seem to be to furnish them with the latest and best weapons, to supply unlimited ammunition—with reasonable insurance that good shooting is attained—unlimited facilities in drill grounds and rifle ranges for drill and practice; in fact, to encourage in every way so cheap an army. So long as it was felt that a citizen army, in conjunction with a smaller regular army, would meet the case, nothing in the way of encouragement for the citizen army should be too much. A drill hall could be provided in every district, where the unpaid soldier would have privileges not open to the civilian pure and simple—the advantages of a club, in fact. If further inducements were necessary, an extra vote could be given to every man thus voluntarily bearing arms and attaining efficiency. Other privileges in the control of a Government could easily be suggested.

In the case of the Navy in particular, the system—or the lack of it—in the past has been inexplicable, especially in view of the tremendous regard in which the senior service is held throughout the Empire. We have allowed too many aliens to creep into our merchant service—the finest nursery for the Navy. Further, we have made practically no effort to secure the right class of boy. If a lad has been wild and finds himself

in a reformatory, he is trained for the sea—a splendid scheme, of course, especially for the bad boy. But should not well-behaved lads of respectable parentage have every possible assistance and inducement held out to join? The middle-class boy who wants to get on, and to adopt the sea as a profession, has little chance of getting into either merchant service or Royal Navy unless his parents are able to afford a few hundred pounds on special education and (for the merchant service) on apprenticeship premiums.

Even for better-class boys, where the expense is not an obstacle, there are great difficulties. Unless he can pass a very severe examination at a very early age, the lad has no chance. A very slight mistake may stop him definitely from entering on a career for which he may be specially suited. Our object should be to obtain good officers for our Navy, and not mere prodigies.

If we desire to keep our Navy efficiently manned, no foreigner should be allowed to ship on any British merchant ship or fishing boat. The conditions and pay should be good enough for Britons to take to the sea as naturally as to other employments; and every inducement should be given to the right sort of lads to join. There might be in every school nautical scholarships, carrying State training with them.

With our regular Army, as it was before the war, I hardly think that we went to work in the best possible way to make successful the system on which it depended—*i.e.*, voluntary enlistment. The Army has to compete with trades for its men. That being so, it should be run on commercial lines. I do not suggest that it would be necessary to compete in the

matter of wages. The thing is to make the services attractive apart from mere pay.

I have sufficient belief in the patriotism of the majority of my countrymen to believe that the service of the nation will always have some attraction. But even patriots should not be asked to make too many sacrifices.

In time of war, Tommy Atkins is a very fine fellow. But in times of peace we have acted as if to belong to the Army was in itself a sort of disgrace. The young man of the middle or lower classes who enlisted has been hardly looked upon as the success of the family, unless he was fortunate enough to become an officer.

If it is an honourable thing to fight for one's country in time of war, the profession of arms should be equally honourable in time of peace. I would have every man wearing the King's uniform looked up to as a man with a future, and the Army and Navy regarded as desirable employments to be obtained only by the best and fittest.

There are innumerable posts under Government—Civil Service, Police, Customs, Municipal officers, and so forth. Civilians, as such, have no special right to these. If there is any right in the matter at all, it is surely with the soldier and the sailor. The mere fact that a man has spent some years of his life in the service of his country at less pay than he could obtain elsewhere, is sufficient justification for preference.

Hitherto we have taken a young man, educated him, given him habits of order and discipline; and then, when he is in the very prime of his manhood and usefulness, we have cast him off to fend for himself at

a disadvantage to those of his fellows who have not been so trained.

In any trade he may desire to enter, the time-expired soldier or sailor has to give a long start to others who have cost the nation nothing ; whereas in the capacities I have mentioned, he would, in the great majority of cases, be much more useful than the untrained civilian, and he would be saving the nation a pension !

To take the Army and Navy, even as they were before the war, is it likely that there would be any lack of suitable postmen, policemen, firemen, Customs officers in their ranks ? Will anyone suggest that there are not any number of smart, capable young fellows who, with very little extra training (easily gained during their period of service), would make admirable Civil Service clerks ?

Once have it accepted that every " Service " man of good conduct is assured of a post after his term of service has expired, and there would be no difficulty in recruiting. The Army should not be a refuge for ne'er-do-wells and unemployed. With conditions such as I have suggested many a father, who in his heart of hearts has considered the enlistment of a son as " making the best of a bad job," would have welcomed it as the satisfactory solution of a difficult problem. The boy would be provided for, his future assured, and that necessary licking into shape unobtainable at home provided.

With an honourable career, however humble, in front of him, the boy immediately becomes a success in life, someone to be proud of. With such a system in vogue the whole tone of the services would improve. The boy would be amongst others who had something

to look forward to, something to work for. This would certainly be to his advantage. And a better sort of youngster would be available.

Naturally, a sound scheme of education which would include the teaching of useful trades would be the most important factor in the matter. There would be other changes. It must not be possible in future for anyone to insult the King's uniform by barring the wearers of it from any place of public resort.

I have not dealt with the many other obvious means of making the service attractive, which would be adopted as a matter of course if our system were put on commonsense commercial lines. The main point is that if the Government want men to enlist voluntarily, they have at hand an easy method of inducing them to do so ; and, in addition, the power to select the best available for their purpose.

One criticism only I would deal with in anticipation. It may be contended that there would not be enough posts to go round. I have not gone into figures to ascertain the respective numbers employed in the departments I have named as compared with the number of men passed out from the services. It is not necessary to do so.

If the actual posts in Government or municipal employ are insufficient, there are outside openings also at Government disposal. The railways, for instance. A railway company is granted a practical monopoly by Act of Parliament. Let one consideration for that monopoly be the employment in every case of a percentage of time-expired men. Then there are the contracting firms, who build battleships, make rifles and ammunition, clothing, equipment, etc. Only

those who employ a given percentage of ex-Army or Navy men should be eligible to tender.

In a word, make the services attractive, and there would be no need to offer high pay—at least to the men—in order to secure the requisite numbers.

In respect to officers, a better rate of pay than at present should prevail, particularly in the direction of making adequate provision for the wives and families of those who are married. We want the most suitable men—not merely those who happen to have private means. This is obvious when it is borne in mind how much the lives of the men under them depend on whether an officer is capable or incapable. It should be a serious profession. Therefore those embracing it should be able to live by it.

Naturally the positions open to officers on conclusion of actual military duty would be in the higher branches of the Civil Service and so forth, and with the better type of men who would be attracted to the Army as a profession (I do not refer to class, but to ability) our better posts under Government would certainly not suffer—rather the contrary, I think.

All of the foregoing applies, of course, only whilst the advisability of continuing a voluntary system is admitted. If it is contended by the experts that only regulars fully trained are worth the expense, it is deceiving ourselves to continue longer on any other lines. In such case, let us as a nation show our moral courage and commonsense by grappling with the question boldly and thoroughly, and provide that regular army. Surely those in authority are able to decide such a point. If not, let us get others who do know. It should be either one thing or the other.

To go on fooling with the question—there is no other term to meet the case—is, in view of what has happened, rank national suicide.

Whether or not national service (or conscription) is indispensable, to raise the standing army which will be large enough for our future needs, I believe that even in time of peace it is of advantage to a nation. This is a conviction arrived at after very careful study of the subject during fifteen years or more. I submit that in war-time it is the only rational method. It is certainly the only possible system, if cost is to be taken into account ; and it is equally just for all, which the present system cannot claim to be.

It is, of course, a very fine thing to boast of our voluntary army. But that, after all, is sentiment, and sentiment is out of place when vital matters, such as the whole future of a great Empire, are at stake.

To me it savours of lack of dignity, if it is not actually degrading, to be advertising, and begging Britons to "do their duty." I would prefer to see it taken for granted that every Briton is prepared to do his duty as a matter of course. If there are those amongst us—and every nation has its percentage of wasters—who are not so prepared, it seems to be grossly unfair to those who are that the others should be let off. Under the voluntary system the best go, making great sacrifices in many cases ; the worst remain behind to take up their jobs and wax fat on the nation's emergency.

The future race has to be considered. Under the voluntary system the pick of our manhood naturally goes first. It is hardly a comforting thought that the race has to be carried on by such a large percentage of those who are unfit, lazy, and lacking in spirit.

Then the question of selection comes in. Under a rational system of national service the young single men would be called on first, only sons with mothers depending on them being excepted.

Skilled workers in munition factories, whose services in their own particular work are as vital as the services of fighting men, would be kept at their jobs; and we should not see men obviously unfit for military service called up and kept in the ranks for months, and then discharged—their jobs filled, and all their personal loss and unsettlement undergone for nothing.

The rot that is sometimes talked by opponents of national service about volunteers being better than pressed men, and about militarism, hardly needs dealing with. In view of the magnificent achievements of the French, Russian, and Belgian armies, there is not much scope left for sneering at conscripts. Nor has the German army proved easy to beat.

That the British, man for man, are superior to the Germans is solely a question of natural character, not of any particular system of enlistment. It must surely be forgotten that the men who did such wonders under Nelson were mainly conscripts—the pressgang being then in operation.

The possession of a large army does not necessarily make a just and peaceful nation aggressive. Because the German people have been led to their doom by a national lust of conquest—which is what is meant by the spirit of militarism, I take it—it does not follow that adequate provision for defence on the part of Britons should alter the whole British character. To my mind the great argument in favour of national service in a *free* people is that it tends to keep down

a spirit of aggression. A nation that has to do its own fighting is much less likely to go to war without real reason than a nation which pays an army to do its fighting for it.

One factor alone, in my view, damns the voluntary system. I submit that the grave issue of whether to stay behind to look after those dependent upon him, or whether, ignoring all else, to respond to his country's call, should never rest with any individual. It is too great a responsibility for any young married man, for instance.

When war comes I would have the whole nation organised for the common good. Anything less savours of tinkering, and opens the door to grave injustice. The soldier and the munition worker should be on an equal footing, with the one difference, that he who risks his life should have the added advantage of those dependent on him being cared for by the State in the event of his death, or becoming maimed or incapable.

Under such a system every man would be put into the position where his services would be of most value to the State. Only young men can stand the heavy strain of prolonged campaigning—the cold and wet of the trenches, the long marches and irregular feeding, and particularly the strain on the nervous system. Obviously the young should go into the firing line. The older men are more satisfactory in munition production, and the thousand and one duties involved when a nation is at war, which are apart from the actual fighting.

Admitted that something of this is being done now, there is still the fact that it is being done nearly two years late, and in any case can now only be carried out

partially and imperfectly. There are thousands of men who are anxious to take their part, but who are not fitted to go into the trenches. Each one of these utilised means a young "fit" man released for the front.

There is another factor to be borne in mind in considering the present hap-hazard method. Many of the older men now being called upon to fight fill important positions, thereby not only assisting in the general welfare by carrying on necessary industries, but also by individually contributing a considerable sum in income-tax. When these are called up, their ability to pay income-tax ceases, the business enterprises dependent on them cease also to contribute toward the national expenditure, and the employees thrown out by the closing of such business lose the power to bear also their smaller share. It is hardly national economy to put such men into the ranks. A private that is costing the country some hundreds per annum in lost income-tax alone on top of his pay, keep, etc., can hardly be considered a profitable investment to the State.

The war has to be paid for; and positions must be found for the many thousands of men who will be returning to civil occupations when the war is over. Obviously our ordinary trade must be disturbed as little as possible. Further, how can occupation be found in war-time for the very large number of men over military age or otherwise ineligible, for boys, or for female labour, if ordinary businesses are indiscriminately broken up?

To take one instance alone, I know of one quite small business which directly and indirectly is the cause of some £4,000 per annum being contributed to

the State. To keep it going it was necessary to obtain exemptions for *eight* men of military age who were skilled and indispensable. With these it was possible to carry on by means of men over military age, or medically unfit, and by female labour. Can the State afford to take these eight men? This is only one case out of thousands.

The French and Italians have, I understand, a very practical system. Even the products of factories supplying goods required for war purposes are only absorbed to the extent of two-thirds of the total output, leaving one-third to keep the ordinary trade going.

It is sometimes contended that to take a young man away from his business is harmful. I do not think it will be seriously contended that the Germans have suffered in their commercial efficiency through their conscription.

From what I have seen in other countries I am fully convinced that the period of military training, taken at what, as regards his future, is perhaps the most important period of a man's life, is of the very utmost value both to the individual and to the country. From a merely physical point of view alone its advantages outweigh any possible disadvantages. We have seen for ourselves of late the marvellous transformation which a course of training has effected in thousands of men; how the stunted, slouching, narrow-chested dullard has "found himself" in the course of even a few months, and become a smart, healthy, altogether bigger and better specimen, alert not only in body, but in mind.

The discipline alone is more than valuable in a country like ours, where, since the dying out of the old

apprenticeship system, discipline, except in public schools, is practically untaught. But the mixing on equal terms with large numbers of men, the feeling of pride engendered, the habits of order and cleanliness, and the general sharpening up of the wits, must be only of advantage in the future career, whatever that may be. Under conscription there would be fewer corner boys and young hooligans running loose.

A considerable experience of working men has convinced me that the ex-soldier of good conduct is the best workman. For many years when selecting men I have given preference to service men on account of their punctuality, discipline, neatness, and general smartness.

In any consideration of national defence the care of those maimed or invalided out of our services should receive first consideration. It is up to us as an honourable nation to avoid any charge of ingratitude when the national danger is past.

We cannot make up to all sufferers all they have lost. But we can at least see that none should suffer want merely from lack of organisation or foresight. The disabled soldier or sailor does not desire charity. As a rule, pensions are only necessary for the incapacitated ; the others merely want a fair chance of earning a livelihood.

The same kind of system that I have suggested in connection with making a voluntary army attractive applies equally here. There are thousands of jobs in the Government gift (or within its influence) which could be filled quite well by disabled men—in some cases with only a little training, or at very slight expense

to the State. And surely such men have the just claim on such posts.

There is one point, however, which appears to need instant attention. I have come across, already, cases of hardship, where men invalided out of the army—those who bore the brunt of the terrible first part of the war, the retreat from Mons, etc.—have suffered privation. I contend that the pay of any wounded or disabled soldier or sailor should continue till his future has been adequately provided for. That is nothing but bare justice. It is unthinkable that men should be already regretting that they “did their bit.” We are not through the war yet. For that reason alone, if for no higher, the matter should be dealt with immediately.

I can think of no nobler task for any of our leaders than putting this whole matter on a proper businesslike footing.

BUSINESS GOVERNMENT

ONE finds amongst the ordinary people one meets an extraordinary unanimity on one point at least, viz., attraction to the idea of a "Business Government," so ably advocated by one of the cleverest brains in our midst. The precise form and constitution of such an ideal is usually vague, and varies constantly in definition. I admit frankly that I do not know exactly what the term means. But the universal tendency to seize on the idea is suggestive in itself.

I take it that, as a rule, the term conveys the idea of a Government that would run the country on sound, businesslike lines, with efficiency in every department as the first consideration, reasonable economy in management, judicious expenditure where necessary, foresight, and sufficient "up-to-date"-ness to keep the country in line with the march of progress.

I leave it to better brains than mine to show how such an ideal can be attained; and I will content myself with dealing with a few instances which have happened to come under my own notice (every business man can give similar examples) of things that should *not* happen under a Business Government.

(a) Firm supplying hand grenades of a particular type, which had become obsolete, offered to cancel contract, charging only for material and the small amount of machining already done. The saving to the country, assuming these grenades would be scrapped when finished, represented from two to three thousand pounds. Told practically to mind their own business—"You have your orders, carry them out" sort of

thing. Result : several weeks of overtime on the part of a number of men who could have been more usefully employed on other Government work, in order that the precious contract should be executed by due date, to prevent cancelment.

(b) Contractor quoting (as he understood) 1s. 6d. each for a certain article, and receiving order for some thousands at 10s. 6d., visited the officer responsible. Discovered that his quotation was 10s. 6d.—a typist's error. "You have your order—execute it." Result : further orders since at same remunerative figure, as the official who did not know enough to detect such a discrepancy in price dare not order elsewhere for fear his ignorance may be shown up.

(c) Small coal and cartage tradesman using some eighteen horses, visited by impressment officer, and his horses commandeered at an average of a little over £50 each. Takes next train and boat (about 25s. return), and returns with further stud picked up at £15 to £18 each. These commandeered, and process repeated for considerable time, during which the coal merchant admits to "doing better out of horses than he did out of his own business."

(d) "A" battery of a certain regiment out at the front always back two hours or thereabouts before "B," "C," "D," "E," and "F" batteries. Chaffing on the part of men of "A" battery and open discontent on the part of the men of other batteries lead to trouble, whereat the General makes inquiries. Officers commanding other batteries silent ; but impetuous subaltern (afterwards reproved, of course) blurts out that *his* battery "could be home as soon, if they had the same contrivance as 'A' battery." Discovering that commander of "A" battery, a practical

engineer (a business man enlisted for the war, by the way), has devised a labour-saving device of value, General says that all the batteries must have it. War Office says "No." Commander of "A" battery sent home to obtain supplies. Inventions Department of Ministry of Munitions (presumably composed of business men) approve invention, and support application. Notwithstanding, the official at War Office, being on his dignity, refuses to order. Result—unknown at time of writing.

(e) The case, soon after the outbreak of war, wherein £40,000 was claimed as intermediary commission on motor cars purchased by the Government.

These would appear to be small matters to bring forward (some of the greater issues I have dealt with already in earlier chapters) in view of the tremendous pressure caused by the necessarily hasty organisation of a large army in time of war. I do not refer to them in any carping desire to find fault. On the contrary, I fully recognise, as most outsiders do, the marvellous work that has been done.

The cases are merely cited as illustrations of the spirit that prevailed before the war was thought of, and which must necessarily continue, despite the great spirit of patriotism which has been displayed by practically all concerned. It is our system that is wrong. British officers, magnificent as they are in their own particular sphere, are not usually good business men. Hence we get the "red tape" so often complained of. I submit that the purely business side of a great army and navy should be in the hands of trained business men—not soldiers, or even lawyers.

The old bureaucratic idea which appears still to

prevail in the services, that a business man cannot be trusted, is entirely wrong. There are thousands of commercially trained men in a great commercial nation like ours who are as straight and honourable and patriotic as any wearer of His Majesty's uniform.

Of course, there are some "wrong 'uns" who would try to get in, but the remedy for such is very simple. A firing party and a blank wall should be the penalty for *every* man who lines his pockets at his country's expense in time of war.

What is the moral of the few minor instances I have used as illustrations? It does not lay in the fact of a few square pegs getting into round holes in such a time of stress as we are going through. That occurs even in ordinary times, in commercial circles as well as in Government departments. The difference, however, is that in ordinary business proved incapables (or unsuitables) are not allowed to retain the power of causing further loss and difficulty.

The cause is to be found, I think, in too much tradition, and too little insistence on efficiency. Only those with full and proved knowledge of the particular subject should be allowed to purchase on behalf of a great nation. Any suggestion of economy or of improvement in method from a subordinate should be met with encouragement instead of being snubbed as at present.

Any evidence of partiality or self-interest should be promptly dealt with; in a word, the keynote throughout all departments of the public service ought to be efficiency and economy.

The principle of having experts in every department would, I imagine, be the first plank of a "Business Government." Promotion for length of service or

for any other reason than proved capacity would cease, and only the man who was master of his job would be able to hold it. This applies to the ordinary affairs of life, and I fail to see why it should not in national affairs, whether great or small.

If this policy prevailed, the scandals which appear inevitable in connection with every war would not occur. We have investigations, at intervals it is true, but no result of a definite character seems ever to be attained. Contracts by the thousand exist in ordinary commerce; but there are no such scandals there. At the utmost an occasional dispute arises, which usually is easily settled by arbitration.

I hold that a dishonest contractor in time of war commits the greatest possible crime. No punishment, even that of death, can be too great for anyone supplying inferior equipment, food, or other necessities to our troops. But these things could not occur without incompetence—or worse—on the part of at least some of the Government officials concerned. That there should be incompetence is the fault of our leaders in not having a proper system. Bribery, no matter how small, would soon cease—at least in a general sense—if promptly and heavily punished.

Under a Business Government our Consuls abroad would be capable of watching and protecting our interests, commercial and otherwise, and would be in all cases British, not foreign. Only those highly qualified by special training in diplomacy would be able to obtain positions in the Diplomatic Service. That, at least, should be no holiday resort for aristocratic young idlers or cadets of political families.

A Business Government when issuing a War Loan

would make it free of income-tax—not allowing new investors, unversed in such matters, to discover when receiving their dividends that 5s. in the £ had been deducted (bringing the interest down to $3\frac{1}{8}$ per cent. instead of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. they expected), and thus spoil the prospects of further issues. It would *not* allow our invaluable steam coal from South Wales to be shipped abroad to be stored for future use against us, or permit British shipping, so necessary to our food supply, to fall into foreign hands, or British ships to be at disadvantage in respect to the load water line by allowing foreign ships without it to use our ports on equal terms.

A Business Government would certainly foster the home production of food as much as possible, and also store more, so that in the event of our losing the command of the sea temporarily, it would take, say, six months to starve us out instead of a week or two as at present.

A Business Government would not permit German or other possibly antagonistic influence to get such a hold on our national affairs as the Germans have done in the past. To acquire ownership in British banks, mines, industries (even those on which the nation depends in time of war, such as explosives and chemicals) was all a part of the great German scheme which has been in preparation for years.

No doubt some of the people referred to, who have become naturalised, are perfectly loyal to this country. But it would be a better policy that all such vital matters should remain in British hands. Even to-day, whilst we are at war with Germany, there is in our midst too much German influence—naturalised or otherwise—for my liking.

A Business Government when making laws would provide the machinery for carrying them out, and would promptly remove from office anyone in authority who nullified an enactment, as Mr. Gladstone did with the Aliens Act. I think also that such a Government would bring all banks, building societies, etc., under rigid control, and investigate carefully every case of failure of limited liability companies, comparing closely the prospectus (or any promise under which the money of investors was obtained) with the actual results. To the criticism which may be raised on the latter point respecting the possible hampering of commercial enterprise, I would reply in advance that no honest man would fear proper investigation, and that such safeguarding would tend to promote investment in home enterprises. At present the impunity with which a promoter may be concerned in numerous companies, every one of them unsuccessful, is a blot on our commercial system.

I do not think that a Business Government, if they desired economy from the public in any particular direction, would waste good money on utterly unconvincing posters. To pass a law telling the people what they may or may not do is obviously much cheaper and simpler, and certainly more dignified. It would seem to be a very open question whether the resulting damage to the clothing, motor-car, or other trades affected might not eventually prove more expensive to the State than any extra sum accruing in the shape of loans made possible by the suggested economy. If the powers that be are not certain enough on that important issue to pass definite legislation, the advertising is a gross injustice to the trades concerned.

But of one thing I am convinced. Any Government

run on practical lines would not be guilty of such palpable waste of the public money, particularly when denouncing waste on the part of the public, as paying to "dug-out" colonels, majors, etc., not only their retired pay and any other emoluments due to them on their retirement, but the full pay and allowances of their active rank in addition. I hate even to refer to the matter, for the sake of the excellent gentlemen affected, who are having the time of their lives. But as a taxpayer I am wondering how much more of the five millions a day is thus thrown away by sheer lack of ordinary organisation.

A Business Government would not lose much time in introducing the metric system. There are many things a Business Government could do, and the views of most people will probably differ as to the details. But what I think most people will agree about is that we want a Government to whom we can with confidence leave our national affairs, so that we may go about our own business in peace; who will mean business, knowing its own mind when serious matters are afoot, without faltering and half-measures; who will make the word of the British Empire again what it was in the past, absolutely trusted and respected; who will insist on equal justice for every section of the community, and especially on the preservation of law and order, and the obedience to laws; in a word, who will carry on the business of the Empire with foresight, firmness, commonsense, and efficiency. Such a Government, though it make many mistakes, will always be able to rely on the solid backing of the average Briton.

OUR CONSTITUTION

WHAT is wrong with our Parliamentary system ? Based on what seems at first sight to be an almost ideal principle, looked up to by all the nations as a model, the "Mother of Parliaments" of which we have all been so proud has yet fallen from its high pinnacle, and is to-day almost a byword. Take any group of average citizens, the man in the street or club, and note the contemptuous references to talk in lieu of deed, the lack of expectation of any definite results, and—most significant of all—the general desire for a strong man to rise amongst us to deal with those questions which have at the moment most weight. This surely must be wrong. Equally surely there must be a remedy for it.

The explanation probably lies in the fact that, however good a principle may be at the outset, the tendency of perverse human nature is to endeavour to convert it to its own selfish ends ; so that, eventually, the original idea is almost lost.

The main principle of our Parliamentary system as I understand it is, that the wishes of the majority prevail through the House of Commons ; the House of Lords and the King having the right of criticism and veto. Is that principle being carried out to-day ? The present restricted powers of the House of Lords, the position which has been forced on the Sovereign by unscrupulous political schemers, form a sufficient answer.

The actual result is, luckily, not quite what the

schemers imagined. To-day the House of Lords, with all its alleged faults, some apparent enough, stands in higher estimation in the popular mind than the elected assembly ; in fact, there are many who not long back were shouting for its abolition who now look upon it as the only safeguard of the nation's liberties.

The case of the King's veto is, to my mind, the greatest charge against our politicians of recent years, and probably one of the greatest causes of the decline of the House of Commons in popular estimation and respect. The tricky tactics which have so carefully formulated the idea that the King's power of veto should never be exercised under any circumstances, have caused a very bad impression on the ordinary man.

Assuming that there are two parties in the country practically equal in numbers, and that the party in power, by a bare majority, and probably only by successful tactics, manages to pass some measure which may seriously divide the nation, even to the verge of civil war (I do not exaggerate in this—witness the Ulster question), it was a good thing for those outside of politics to feel that the King, by merely refusing to sanction the contentious measure, could prevent the trouble.

Obviously, it is to the advantage of those who study the nation's interest last, who think only of getting their own way regardless of consequences, that such a wholesome safeguard should be whittled away.

Take the case of the Parliament Bill itself. If his Majesty, on having it presented to him, had insisted before signing on having a clear, definite pronouncement from the country as a whole that a change in the

Constitution was desired by a solid majority of the people, would not the whole country have backed him up? Surely there can be no more democratic form of government than where the Sovereign in such manner acts as guardian of the people's will?

The argument applies even more to the Home Rule Bill. Here were we on the very verge of civil war, and the party which brought in the cause of it only able to claim a majority of some 200,000 votes or thereabouts in all, even reckoning the directly interested Irish vote! I venture to state, from what I have seen and heard on all sides, that if King George had then swept aside the artificial tradition, thus insisting on his undoubted prerogative, he would be not only (as he is) popular and well loved, but would be looked upon as one of the greatest kings known, and as such go down in history.

It is to the mind of the ordinary citizen monstrous that such a state of affairs could possibly exist at all. I would have the Sovereign say in every such case, "Show me unmistakable evidence that the change is desired by (say) even a two-thirds majority of the people, and I will agree." In such a system the King never sets himself against the will of his people; but instead sees to it that only the will of the people is executed. Events in the past few years have amply proved the necessity for such a safeguard.

In the old days, a Government which sustained any appearance of reverse, or which appeared to have lost some of the public's confidence, at once appealed to the country. To-day no such honourable, straightforward course prevails—a party may sustain defeat after defeat in bye-elections, and still cling to power. That is one of the instances where our Parliament has

deteriorated under the party system ; and it is one of the greatest of the causes of the loss of confidence amongst ordinary people, who feel that once a party gets into power it may force without check extreme measures on an unwilling country. Whilst it is possible for a party to hang on to office for ten years, it is little consolation to know that such measures may probably be reversed later.

There are other things which have shaken the nation's confidence. The lack of dignity and extreme views of some of those in high places, for example. The nation does not want irresponsible, inaccurate demagogues in lieu of statesmen, and particularly resents the highly dangerous practice of setting class against class. It is madness to play with fire—some of us have not yet forgotten the French revolutions, or the Indian Mutiny. One cannot imagine a Gladstone or a Salisbury or any of our really great teachers of the past "Limehousing" about dukes, or permitting a Keir Hardie to fool with a lighted torch in a powder magazine by mouthing sedition in India.

The aristocracy has shown us in this war what it is worth to the land, and how unjust were the charges levelled against it for party ends.

There are, of course, careless dukes—even bad dukes ; but is any one class free from bad specimens ? This war, if it has done nothing else, has brought the classes together, and removed many false ideas which might easily have led to grave trouble in the future. To-day, the masses and the classes, having fought side by side, and died together equally nobly in a common cause, know and respect each other.

One cannot imagine a great statesman of the past

pandering to one particular class (for the sakes of votes) at the expense of the other classes, entirely regardless of the possible consequences of such a policy. We have seen the entire country held up by a group of strike-leaders on Tower Hill, and permits given to the Government to pass post office vans, etc. We have seen the Trade Unions actually set outside the pale of the law in the Trades Disputes Act; and we have seen some millions of loyal people compelled to take up arms—and to become in fact rebels—in order that they shall not be forced out of the Empire of which they are proud, into servitude under a disloyal section.

We have seen a Parliament decide on paying itself for its work, without first obtaining the sanction of those who elected it—putting itself in the position practically of a manager whose first use of power is to help himself out of the till. I do not say that payment of members might not have been agreed to by the country. My point is that the country was not first asked. There is another matter on which the best of our Parliamentary traditions do not appear to have been maintained in recent years. A discredited statesman in the past retired into oblivion; to-day we see the remarkable spectacle of one who has made a hopeless muddle in one capacity simply moved on into another. The most glaring mistakes are ignored. Apparently even inaccuracies on the part of those in high places—a fatal political crime in the old days—do not matter. The prestige of the Empire may suffer; but that would seem to be of less importance than that any member of the party in power should lose his job.

What is the wonderful hold on the affections of his

colleagues that a McKenna must possess to be tried in post after post? I have failed to find any conspicuous success in any of them to justify so many chances.

Why does Mr. Churchill, after leaving the Navy and joining the Army, still continue to speak for the Navy instead of the proper Admiralty officials?

The wave of positive apprehension, which ran like wildfire through the country on the outbreak of war, that Lord Haldane might possibly be selected instead of Kitchener—the still present and very general fear that he may be allowed to have a “finger in the pie” when it comes to discussing terms of peace, despite his failure to warn his countrymen, his friendship with the Kaiser, his announcement that Germany is his “spiritual home” (whatever that may mean), and his past mistakes—alone prove my contention. I do not think these things could happen in any other country.

No wonder we, who are not politicians, feel that all is not well, and that further safeguards are necessary.

We hear a great deal about mandates. But the issues of an ordinary General Election generally cover a wide field; and, being confused, can be twisted into almost any mandate required. The most noteworthy fact is that on any serious question the party which prates most about “the people’s will” has consistently refused to avail themselves of the referendum! Surely if they represented the people they would welcome a clear, unobscured decision. It is farcical; and it shows up plainly the insincerity of modern politics. I cannot imagine a more democratic form of procedure than a direct vote of the whole people on one plain issue.

I would like to see a House of Commons which was elected *annually*, with constituencies more equal than at present. It is hard for the average mind to understand why, say, 1,500 electors in an obscure Irish district should have the same weight as 30,000 or 40,000 electors elsewhere.

I would have a House of Lords composed as to one-third of representatives elected by the nobility, one-third of Colonial representatives, and the remaining one-third of great statesmen, viceroys, ambassadors, generals, admirals, and others whose services to the State entitled them to honour at the hands of the nation. And I would have the veto of the Sovereign an accepted fact, instead of a tradition.

Ours being an Imperial Parliament in name, it should be also in fact. Despite our Byles, our Hogges, and such little people, this is a great Empire, and it must remain so. No Little Englanders can alter that fact, especially after the magnificent loyalty displayed by our Colonies and Dependencies in our great emergency.

What should we have done without the ready, ungrudging aid of our Australian, Canadian, New Zealand, and other troops? No finer fighters in the world than they—not even the best of our seasoned British troops—and we are proud that they are part of us. It was a deplorable enough business when, before the war, “the door was slammed” in the faces of our Colonies; but no such sorry spectacle of combined bad manners and crass stupidity—the same short-sightedness which lost us our North American Colonies in the past—should be possible from now onward.

I would have the whole Empire represented in our

Parliament—but if that is not possible, our Colonies, etc., should have a voice in the conduct of the Empire in some other way which is real, practical, and effective. I suggest that a few ex-Colonial Premiers might with advantage replace some of the legal gentlemen or some of the family connections in our Cabinet. Most certainly they would be a vast improvement on Germans—whether naturalised or not—in our Privy Council.

It may be objected that yearly elections would be troublesome and expensive. In actual practice the contrary, I believe, would be the case. A simple permanent machinery could easily be in existence, and the regularity and “accustomedness” of elections would prevent the dislocation of ordinary affairs which takes place at present. Such a system would make for continuity of policy, as representatives who give satisfaction to their constituencies would automatically be re-elected, and there would be no danger of constant change of Government whilst the Government represented the will of the people.

The same machinery which carried out elections could also carry out the referendum on special questions.

The House of Lords would not, of course, institute any legislation, but would have power of rejection, or of referring the matter to referendum.

Any point on which there were divergence of opinion between the two Houses should be settled by direct vote of the people. There should be no possibility in future of the House of Commons being able to alter in any way the Constitution.

On the question of suffrage, the female vote is, I assume, a certainty after the wonderful part played

by the sex during this war. I, like many others, have always agreed with it, despite the efforts of a few silly Suffragettes to destroy the sympathy of their male supporters. But when the vote is given, it must be the right of married women as well as single. It is necessary for the good of the community that the married state should not suffer in any way, as it would undoubtedly if the married women were denied privileges accorded to their single sisters.

No one, however, of either sex should have a vote who was not contributing to the national revenue. It is an admitted principle, as old as the eternal hills, that "those who pay the piper should call the tune," and it will be as readily agreed that those who do not pay have no right to have any voice in the matter.

The principle would involve a thorough and practical system of universal registration, which, I submit, has many advantages on its own account, instead of the present utterly futile partial form. The scheme of universal payment to Imperial revenue which would form the general qualification for electoral privileges is outlined in a succeeding chapter (Taxation), and any exceptions which might cause injustice could easily be dealt with, as a special matter, by the exercise of a little practical commonsense.

Two instances occur to me in this connection, *i.e.*, the case of married women, and that of unmarried women having no vocation in connection with which the automatic deduction from earnings could be exercised. The former would have the vote as a matter of right, the income which supports them having already borne its quota. The latter, if they wished to obtain the right to vote, would naturally be able—not being dependent on earnings—to afford a fixed sum

annually, amount to be determined, in return for the privilege.

I would not give any voting power whatsoever to the alien. Furthermore, the descendants of aliens should not be considered British citizens until the third generation after naturalisation. If the privilege is valued, it is worth waiting for.

There is much to be said for the system in vogue in some other countries whereby those who have degrees conferred upon them—doctors, lawyers, etc.—should have an extra vote. These, in common with large employers of labour, etc., should, I think, naturally have more voice in the affairs of the State, in view of their greater stake in it, apart from the fact that their obviously more highly developed mental powers should carry more weight, than the single vote of, for instance, an agricultural labourer.

The great essential is, however, that those who represent us in Parliament should be fitted for the work. We want trained minds, practical business men, experts and specialists—not that type of professional politician whose only object is to hang on to office, nor pompous nonentities whose sole recommendation lies in contributions to party funds, nor inexperienced fledgelings dependent on family influence. The process of selection in this as in other matters needs overhauling—we want suitable men first. I would have every candidate entirely dependent on his own *unaided* efforts for election, not bolstered up by party leaders speaking on his behalf.

The British character, if slow to move, is tenacious, and it particularly dislikes being treated with contempt. The “tongue-in-the-cheek” dodge of meeting

any serious indication that a reform is generally desired, by throwing to the troublesome public a measure ostensibly purporting to meet the case, but so full of "ifs" and "buts" that its failure is assured beforehand, is no doubt astute. But it is not entirely unknown in other walks of life than politics. Such moves may enable the author or authors to keep their post for a time; but even under our system General Elections cannot be deferred for good. These matters lie entirely in the hands of the public, and so long as indifference and apathy prevail, so long will our Parliamentary system remain more imperfect than it need be.

“THE LIBERTY OF THE SUBJECT”

PROBABLY there is no phrase which in discussion of our national affairs is more often used than “the liberty of the subject.” Certainly there is none that is more often misused. The real meaning appears to be as little grasped, by many people, as the meaning of the terms “Free Trade” and “Tariff Reform.” It would seem that the phrase is generally invoked when *license* is wished for, or when liberty is desired to restrict the liberty of somebody else.

We, being in effect the freest people on earth, are justly proud of our liberty, and I trust we shall always be ready to fight for it as we have been in the past. But it is one thing to know and appreciate true freedom, and another to grasp at spurious imitations. I take it that there is no such thing in the world as an entirely free individual, unless it be the solitary resident on an island in the Pacific.

The “liberty of the subject” does not permit us to despoil our neighbour or injure his property; and I submit that it should not permit anyone to act, whether from conscientious motives or otherwise, in a manner that is against the interests of the community at large, or to interfere with the pursuits or enjoyments of other people.

Particularly in the matter of “free speech” is the principle abused. Talkers of sedition in our parks, strike leaders advising force, disloyal Irishmen, and such are opposing just as much the laws of the land—though with far greater possibilities of harm to others—as those who steal.

I think we go to extremes in such matters, showing thereby merely foolish weakness, instead of a just and laudable strength in support of our liberties. Sentiment is all very well in its proper place, but I cannot help thinking that there is a surfeit of it these days, and that some well-meaning people are inclined to carry it to excess in this category almost as much as in the mawkish action of sending bouquets to murderers.

The demagogue inciting to riot has no thought of whose property may be damaged, whose business ruined. Has the other man no liberty in the matter, except to suffer ?

There isn't much said about the liberty of the subject when taxes have to be raised. The minor inquisition of the Land Act did not show an overweening respect for the tradition that an “ Englishman's house is his castle ” ; but, presumably because it was directed principally against those possessing property, there was little outcry about it.

A glaring instance of misuse of the term is found in connection with labour troubles. Any man is, of course, free to refrain from accepting any given rate of pay (or terms and conditions) of any given employer or set of employers ; but there the “ liberty ” in the matter ends. When he, by organisation or otherwise, injures the business of the employer, whether by actual damage or merely by preventing the employer from carrying on his business, more particularly when he prevents other workers who may be satisfied with and glad to get the despised pay and conditions from taking up the work, the question of the liberty of the subject arises from the opposite side.

In a free country the employer has the right to engage whom he will, and no man who desires to work should be prevented from working. The "right to work" that we hear so much about applies to the other fellow equally with the striker.

A minor example of the misuse of the phrase occurs in connection with the vaccination question. Even if inoculation had not proved successful against small-pox and other diseases, should there be any "right" of resistance to a law passed in the national interest? The anti-vaccinator may not believe in the process, but he has no right to risk the health of those who do. In such matters it isn't possible for us to be free.

Where one does see in our midst too much interference with the liberty of the subject is in connection with the old strain of Puritanism which in its extreme form is one of our national defects. I refer to the desire to run other people's lives and morals for them, the constant interference of the sour-faced brigade, so well expressed by the poet as "compounding sins they are inclined to, by damning those they have no mind to." I do not want to go to race meetings, nor to sit in public-houses on Sundays; but that is no reason for impertinent interference on my part with those who do.

On the drink question, in particular, we have been neither logical nor just. I understand and deprecate the evils of drunkenness as much as any man, and would support any measure that was honestly intended to reduce them. For instance, I would like to see all drunkenness, whether public or private, a very heavily punishable offence, and habitual or incorrigible drunkards permanently detained in suitable establishments, where they would be made to earn their own keep. But to

continue harrying the brewers and distillers, as in the past, is simply Pharisaism. If the making of drink is declared illegal, we shall know where we are. Until it is, that trade has the same right to protection from the attacks of faddists as any other trade. It is puerile to pretend that the brewers and distillers deserve no consideration. We have permitted investors—including clergymen, widows, etc.—to sink their money in such enterprises, and we have derived a great part of our national revenue in the past from the trade. Therefore we have no right whatsoever to injure the value of such property in any way. If measures which may depreciate the invested capital are absolutely essential in the public interest, full compensation should be given to those affected by them.

The “liberty of the subject” should not, in my view, include the right of any man to get drunk and starve those dependent on him. But, on the other hand, it is interference with the liberty of the subject to lay down rules for sober men as to when and what they drink, or to confiscate any part of their investments—even on moral grounds—provided such investments are in enterprises permitted by the law.

As a moderate man, owning not a penny in any brewery or similar concern, I object to the unfairness of the continual interference of the fanatic teetotal section. I am ashamed to let a foreign visitor see our British Sunday, and I resent not being allowed to finish my supper in peace should I desire to eat after the theatre.

Why cannot we adopt the commonsense methods of the great French nation in these matters? Cannot Britons be equally trusted? The truth is that under

the French system drunkenness is less than under ours. Total prohibition does not produce very elevating results on Sundays in Wales and Scotland, or in the prohibition states of America. The whole thing savours too much of cant or Pharisaism for my liking. Britons have done well enough in the past on good honest beer; and though many of our teetotal soldiers and sailors have fought well, I have no liking for the prospect of a future Briton entirely nourished on teetotal drinks. At the same time I have no desire to interfere with those who do like them, or to compel anyone to drink beer or wine who may prefer anything else.

I honestly believe that in our hearts the great bulk of us resent petty tyranny, hypocrisy, and Pharisaism as much as ever in the past. Yet how meekly, from lack of moral courage to call a spade a spade, we put up with these things!

THE NATIONAL HEALTH

THE one thing which has, I think, been the main cause of that charge of hypocrisy which is sometimes laid at our door by other peoples is the tendency to pretend that certain things do not exist, particularly in connection with matters relating to public health and morals.

To a certain extent I am afraid the charge is justified. For instance, I as a Briton am not proud of the state of our streets either in the West End of London or in any large provincial city. It is folly to ignore the fact that they do not compare favourably with the Continental cities.

Why are these things not dealt with? It would seem that the very powerful voting influence of that weird conception known as the "Nonconformist conscience" stands in the way. The repeal of the C.D. Acts, in any case, was owing to that influence; any military man can give eloquent testimony anent the disastrous effects on our Army "strength" as the result of that useful measure being done away with.

It is not a good thing to know that the tainted scum of the Continent, when deported (or finding its occupation gone) on medical grounds, at home, can look upon this country as a safe haven of refuge.

Why pretend these things don't exist? If people could be made moral by Acts of Parliament it would be another matter. But the ages have proved that they cannot. I admit that it is very dreadful such things should have to be dealt with; but the same

applies to murder and other matters we have to face. It is only a question of moral courage.

It seems to me that the explanation must lie in the fact that the great bulk of Britishers, consisting of average sound, plain-thinking people, suffer from the national reticence and reserve, dread the reproach of appearing to court publicity, and fear to incur, by expressing unorthodox views, the stigma of not being "respectable." These allow themselves to be ruled against their better judgment by a small but noisy majority of faddists and extremists.

If a man only shout loud enough, he is accepted—for a time. No matter how unjust or fanatical his views may be, if he but bring in religion or morality he may not be opposed—publicly—for fear of the opposer being classed among the unrighteous. "Respectability" is the great fetish. It is not "the thing" to have sound commonsense views on certain matters, or to give vent to opinions on any subject which may shock the moralists.

Naturally we do not want these questions to be publicly discussed; but a wise Government would deal with them firmly, if unobtrusively. It is very often a good thing when the general welfare is concerned to do it first and obtain permission afterwards.

The question of infant mortality is one that has been too long neglected. One hears much about the insufficient increase of population, with many and various theories for dealing with the problem—of course, always in very guarded language, as being most suitable for a highly respectable nation. But is not the truth of the matter that far too many of our young children

are allowed to die? Deal with that point, and I take it that our present birth-rate will keep the population up to necessary proportions.

The magnificent work being done by our far too few women health visitors would be even more valuable and effective than it is if certain diseases were compulsorily notifiable. In the absence of this, they are powerless in the really serious cases—serious as far as the nation's future fitness is concerned. Much has been done to fight cancer and tuberculosis. Why neglect to deal with this even worse scourge?

I do not agree with Lloyd George's scheme for paying the parents 30s. on the birth of each child. Excellent as its intention may be, if he were more in touch with the people he would know that in that class for which the project was instituted the money does not usually benefit mother or infant.

A far better way—if we dare to face hard facts—would be to give food, medical comforts, etc., to that value or more, so that both should be properly nourished and cared for during the critical first month; and to give a bonus of £5 for every child presented to the medical officer *at the age of two years*, provided the child be up to normal standard in weight, height, size, etc.

A child that gets through its first two years safely stands a reasonable chance of pulling through afterwards "on its own." A glance at the death-rate returns of children will be sufficient for anyone interested in the subject. There is too much business being done to-day in the insurance of very young children. I would like to see the system made illegal.

I contend that, as it is vital that our population should grow, the expenditure suggested would be well

repaid ; also the provision of good lying-in facilities for the respectable poor, which facilities should be free from stigma of the workhouse infirmary or any suggestion of parish relief.

The propagation of the unfit is, in particular, a subject that should not be avoided as at present. From every possible point of view I contend that it is a national crime to allow the mentally afflicted, the epileptic, and the diseased (whether from consumption or worse) to bring children into the world.

I care not a jot about the liberty of the subject on such points. We have to take out a licence if we wish to keep a dog, or use a gun, or drive a car ; why not a licence to get married ? Nor do I care for the opinion of the nasty-minded puritans who would rather cover up a festering sore, pretending it was not there, than try to cure it.

A nation cannot continue great if it is not a healthy nation—if its vitality is being sapped. These matters, together with the food question, require firm handling, Nonconformist conscience or no Nonconformist conscience.

TRAINING THE YOUNG

FOR an ordinary man to venture amongst the stormy waters of the education question—or the many questions relating to the training of the young—would savour of lunacy. So much has been written or said already on this pet subject of controversialists, and so many authorities have differed about it, that to express any views whatsoever would appear to be a certain prelude to utter annihilation by the critics. And yet, without being deeply versed, or laying claim to be an authority, one cannot help feeling in a general way that the present system is not as commonsense in character, nor far-sighted, as it might be, nor even economical.

Much has been done, of course, and much is being done. In this matter we are to-day far ahead—in most respects—of what we were in the past. Even too much is being done in some directions, though too little in others.

Before I am rent for heresy in connection with the first half of the preceding sentence, let me immediately set forth my belief that, generally speaking, it is not possible to do too much in the direction of education. But what is done should be on right lines.

I am a firm believer in universal education. I do not see how any nation, in these competitive times, can hope to keep up in the race unless it is fully equipped with knowledge. The higher the percentage of highly-trained intellects among its population, the greater its prospects of advancement along the lines of national prosperity.

Therefore, let us have every possible facility for developing the best intellects, wherever they are to be found, irrespective of class or creed.

But it seems to me that, at present, we are endeavouring to bring all up to a higher standard than is advisable, and not making sufficient allowances for the variations in mental capacity which will surely exist as long as human nature.

I would insist on every boy and girl being able to read, write, and calculate—the “three R’s,” in fact. But, directly it is endeavoured to carry all beyond that point, I believe that waste sets in. The greater part of the very excellent teaching in our Board Schools, for instance, is completely forgotten as soon as the period of schooling is done. The simple fact is that the majority of children, for whom the great expense is incurred and in whose interests the vast organisation has been evolved, are not capable of utilising, or even remembering, the knowledge imparted.

I have no desire to make use of the clap-trap arguments anent teaching Board School children foreign languages, the elements of chemistry, algebra, or to play the piano. By all means place the higher branches of education within the reach of the very poorest, so long as they show an aptitude for acquiring it, or a desire to do so; but do not try to force it on all. The “three R’s” will not only be ample equipment in life for the great majority, but all they will ever be likely to acquire, or to utilise in any way.

Certainly a general idea of geography and history should be within the reach of the dullest. Every child should know something at least about the history of his own country, as well as grasp the fact that there

are also other countries in the world which have their good points, and with which we have to compete in peace as well as in war. But there, I think, it should end. Beyond that stage the system of universal education should extend only in the direction of endeavouring to produce good citizens.

I would have every boy taught to swim; also the rudiments of military drill, and such useful things as how to breathe and eat properly (I would ask those who are inclined to smile at this to refrain a moment until they have quite grasped how much there is in the idea), and other common rules of health. A course of drill and "setting-up" and exercise in the early stages of a boy's life would have more effect in his—and the nation's—future than any classics. Of course, some small attempt is made in that direction already; in some cases only. I would have it universal and thorough.

Then, again, there are certain fundamental principles of which many of our lower orders at least are woefully ignorant. The teaching of these is usually left to the home; a system that no doubt works well enough amongst the leisured classes, but lamentably fails amongst the hard-working poor. In addition to the common laws of hygiene, sanitation, and such matters, I would have every boy taught the rudiments of good citizenship, such as the necessity for the preservation of law and order, for the keeping of bargains, for speaking the truth, and for defending his country.

These matters are common to all religions, and, therefore, need awaken no bitter controversy. It would not be a very bad thing if the average boy understood—he certainly does not at present—the main principles governing the relations of capital and labour,

the law of supply and demand, and the essential differences not only between the various forms of government, but between the various doctrines which affect the world's history, both religious and economic. We should probably hear less wild talk in the future on the subject of, for instance, Socialism.

In a word, let us aim at making good citizens, and particularly at developing intelligence and understanding, instead of cramming into unresponsive and unwilling heads a given number of uninteresting subjects, learnt by rote and almost immediately forgotten. Given a sound groundwork of general knowledge and an awakened understanding, the other subjects referred to can be not only easily acquired, but will be, in every case where the original mental equipment warrants it.

What children really learn is rarely forgotten in after life. I do not refer to the usual "lessons." These are not learnt in the way I mean. They are not stamped on a child's mind like something which is put before them in an interesting way, and is therefore understood. A boy who has grasped some of the main facts of history, and who knows what other countries are doing, is less likely to acquire impossible ideas, and more likely to grow up into a good citizen proud of his country, and anxious for its welfare.

In the training of girls the same principles would apply. Instead, however, of teaching swimming, military drill, and political economy, etc., I would have them taught sewing, cooking, domestic economy, and particularly the rudiments of feeding and bringing up young children. We should be better off as a nation if girls acquired the knowledge early in life that gin and winkles, for instance, do not form a good diet for babies, or if there were more wives of working men

who from judicious training whilst they were young were able to cook well, and to make a pound of their husband's earnings go as far as (say) the average French housewife does.

A study of conditions amongst the working classes leads me to the conclusion that true economy is almost non-existent, mainly as the result of ignorance. Grown women will not join classes or be lectured; but what is properly taught in early youth is likely to be applied later on as a matter of course.

I would have the making of our school-books, particularly of the history books, in the hands of the best intellects in the land, every word considered with even more care than is given to Acts of Parliament. The history should be just and true—not recording merely our own victories in the past—and free from any tinge of politics, prejudice, or creed. There are great minds in our midst capable of such work, and such a task, involving as it does so profound an effect on the future welfare of the Empire, is not unworthy of the very greatest.

I think the method employed in the appointment of teachers would be worth looking into. Bearing in mind the vital importance of the work, nothing being of more importance to the community at large than the rearing of good citizens, teaching would seem to call for better pay than at present. We want the best people obtainable for the work. Special care should be taken that no one who does not possess qualifications and aptitude for the work should be able to obtain the necessary certificates. All teachers should be certificated, and under no circumstances should teachers be allowed to impart "views" or ideas—personal or otherwise—which have not been definitely approved by the authorities.

Assuming that the "three R's," together with the general subjects already mentioned, mark the limit of universal or compulsory education, I would have every possible facility placed at the disposal of those who desire a more complete education. There should be engineering and other scholarships, and cheap universities; and particular attention should be paid to special training for skilled occupations. We need a large class of highly-trained craftsmen, especially in matters relating to chemistry, etc., to enable us to compete successfully with German and other commercial competition. In the old days the apprenticeship system served us well; in these days, when competition grows more strenuous, we have discarded that, and provided nothing in a general sense to take its place.

Any system of education which is based on the making of good citizens will naturally meet with opposition from that extraordinary class known as Little Englanders.

Their numbers are few, however, and it is on record that every nation from time immemorial has suffered from similar moral excrescences—probably on the same principle that a dog has fleas.

Our fault has been in allowing them too much license for their contemptible doctrines, so utterly opposed to the sound, healthy British spirit. Will it be believed that a naturally patriotic people have allowed a tiny minority to go so far as to—in some instances, at least—prevent school children from knowing the honour due to King and flag? With our record, and with a King worthy of all honour, it is inconceivable. Yet it is not an exaggeration. There are many schools where the national flag is not permitted to be displayed

on national festivals. It is only this year, probably through the healthy influence of the war spirit, that the Government has finally decreed that the flag may be flown on Empire Day, which is a step in the right direction. But how sad that such permission should be necessary !

An extract from a daily paper of recent date is worth quoting on this point :—

WHAT SIR W. BYLES DOES NOT KNOW.

Sir William Byles, M.P., speaking last night at the original members' dinner at the National Liberal Club, said he did not know when Empire Day was, and if he saw a display of bunting he should suppose it meant a window-dressing competition.

Imperialism appeared to him to be a danger to Liberalism. Empire was rather a dangerous word, and he was not quite sure that patriotism was not suspect. We looked forward to the time when Norman Angellism and internationalism would have succeeded imperialism, and bound the nations of Europe in a beneficent bond of brotherhood.

TARIFF REFORM

TO a convinced Free Trader like myself, taught from youth up to look upon "Free" Trade as almost a religion and certainly the main cause of our commercial greatness, any suggestion that our national system could possibly be at fault was sacrilege, until I travelled in other countries on business journeys.

Prolonged inquiry into the matter, as the result of that travel, left me, like so many other ordinary people, confused with oceans of conflicting argument.

But several concrete ideas persisted in remaining; and I would endeavour to epitomise them.

(a) That in my experience our commercial rivals, particularly Germans and Americans, whilst sneering at our out-of-date methods, and evidently looking upon the British people as fools, showed great care not to "rub it in" too much, being plainly very desirous that we should not alter our methods.

(b) That practically every country in the world had adopted import duties, except England and Turkey. I was not proud of the companionship when discussing the subject abroad.

(c) That even our own Colonies were opposed to us on this point.

(d) That emigration flowed too largely from this country (as compared with others), *and always to protected countries.*

(e) That I was unable to find in other countries the

same amount of unemployment which existed in this country, nor the same "slums" and misery.

(f) That the Free Traders over here were so bitter in their advocacy, so indisposed to consider the question fairly on its merits (despite its vital character as regards the nation's commercial future), and that they so largely consisted of gentlemen with foreign names, and those either engaged on trades which would be directly affected by the suggested reform, or—more curious still—who were already profiting by protection in the only protected trades we have, viz., cocoa, tobacco, and chemicals.

(g) That we had undoubtedly lost many of our manufactures through foreign competition, and particularly through dumping, against which, under our system, we had no remedy.

(h) That Germany and other countries which had not the virgin resources of America, had still progressed in their exports and general trade much faster than we had, despite our long lead in the past.

Argue as one may against them, these are hard facts which cannot be ignored; and in face of them I cannot see the reason for such frantic objection to even an inquiry on the matter.

The times change, and what suited our grandfathers in other matters certainly would not suit us to-day. Why should trade be the only exception, the only matter on which we may not find need to march with the times? The very fact that there is so much bitter opposition even to investigation of the subject is suspicious in itself.

I have stated that I was a Free Trader. I am still—if Free Trade were possible. But I know now

that it never existed, and there seems now very little likelihood that it ever will. If the other nations are ready to come into line with us, as Cobden predicted they would, what could be finer than Free Trade? Britons only want an equal chance—a fair field and no favour.

The very name is an absurdity under existing conditions, if one thinks for a moment. "Trade" does not mean one side only—it is not "free" if open on one side and restricted on the other, *i.e.*, the countries we trade with. But it isn't "free" on our side even. If it is, why do I have to pass Customs officers on arrival at a British port? Do we not derive a large part of our national income from import duties? That being so, I should see no reason why it should be any crime to suggest revision or reform in connection with those duties, in view of the constantly changing conditions under which we live.

The whole subject would appear to call for careful inquiry, unbiassed and entirely free from political atmosphere. It seems to me to be essentially a subject on which the opinion of the people should be obtained by means of the Referendum. That opinion should be based on facts, honestly set out. We don't want arguments of the big loaf and the little loaf, your-food-will-cost-you-more type. These are mere parrot-cries for the ignorant and unthinking. In view of the ascertained facts as to the cost of living in the protected countries, the conditions of their trade, and particularly of the welfare of their working classes, I have little respect for the politicians who make use of such palpably insincere clap-trap. If they really believe these things, if they do not know better, away with them, and let us have men who *do* know.

The extraordinary thing about the matter is that Free Traders as a rule go to such extremes in their arguments. It is apparently always assumed by them as a matter of course that those who, like myself, want our trading conditions to at least receive fair investigation, to make sure that we have not dropped behind the times, are desirous of introducing all the worst evils of Protection, instead of any such advantages as that system may possess, that we wish to "tax the people's food," that we are planning to injure or kill our great shipping industry, and would have no imports at all into this country of foreign-manufactured goods. No assertions to the contrary appear to carry any weight. And yet it is only a moderate reform of an already existing system that is suggested.

I do not think there is anyone in his senses who ever imagined that Tariff Reform would prove a universal panacea. At the best, it can only put us in the same position as the nations against whom we have to compete. Sweating and similar evils have nothing to do with either system, as far as I can see, or the rate of the wages either. What is desired is that we shall not, under an unfair handicap, lose those manufactures which are so essential to the prosperity of our working classes. Instead of wishing to kill foreign competition, it is proposed to utilise it by letting it bear a portion of our fiscal burden.

As to our merchant shipping, of course every Tariff Reformer desires to see that protected and encouraged in every possible way. There is no reason why it should suffer ; in fact, many believe it would be better off under a commonsense system.

A common form of opprobrium which one meets in any endeavour to advocate Tariff Reform is that of

“Protectionist.” I welcome the title, and am amused at those who use it as a term of reproach. It is admittedly the first duty of any man worthy of being considered a good citizen to protect his honour, his wife and children, his rights, liberty and property, and to help to protect his country. If that be a virtue, why may he not protect his trade and prevent his industries from being taken away?

It would be a crowning joke if the result were not so serious.

A large number of British working men have been sent to the Continent to see for themselves. Let us have their testimony set out squarely and honestly. It is a bad cause which needs unfair argument and trickery to bolster it up.

What I, as a business man, do know and can be sure of is, that by means of tariffs other countries are able to hold their home markets first, and thus obtain sufficient output for cheap production; that capital for British industries is very difficult to obtain on account of the ever-present fear of ruinous competition from foreign dumping; and that if we are to keep up our position among the nations we must hold our industries.

We must not become mere merchants, or carriers alone. If we only trade in foreign-made goods we become middlemen, and as such are at the mercy of those who produce for us—a not very proud position for a great nation.

A merchant with a few clerks can do the same turnover (as far as trade returns are affected) as a very large factory employing a thousand or so workpeople. But the result is very different for the State. The

factory employed means plenty of business for local shopkeepers, rent for house owners, and so forth. The wages paid to workpeople are an advantage all round. When the local baker, butcher, and bootmaker are busy supplying the needs of the workers, the local plumber and painter find more work, the local jobmaster gets busy, even gardeners and odd men benefit. Builders, of course, benefit, as apart from repairs and additions to factories, small house property is needed. It is useless to labour so obvious an argument.

“Good times” in a manufacturing community means good times for everybody—not merely the workers in the factories—in an ever-widening circle. Wages go up all round, apart from the factory workers, owing to the lessened competition in the general labour market.

If our industries decline, what is there for the working classes to do but to emigrate? Therefore, we must keep a watchful eye on the matter to be quite sure our manufactures do not go from us.

Very much is said by Free Traders on the score of low prices—particularly in the cost of living—ignoring the fact that under Free Trade we already raise some £13,000,000 per annum from import duties on food. Tea, cocoa, sugar, figs, and raisins are used by the working classes. Would it not be better to change over to the silks, motor-cars, diamonds, and other things bought by the rich? What utter dishonesty to talk of a “free breakfast table” in face of the existing facts.

Under a Free Trade Government the cost of living has advanced very greatly in recent years, quite apart

from the war. The truth is that the Germans and French working men are better off than ours in respect to cheapness of living, and even the American working man, with his infinitely higher wages, pays very little more for food, etc.

The British workman knows well enough that even if our present system produced cheaper and better living, it would be of no advantage to him if he has no wages wherewith to purchase the necessaries. I submit that the first essential for our working classes is that wages should be good and work plentiful; it does not matter very much in that case even if the Free Traders' assertion that food will cost more proves to be true.

I believe it is untrue. The first principle of Tariff Reform is to remove some of the food taxes already existing (putting them instead on luxuries and goods of foreign manufacture), avoiding as much as possible any duty on either the people's necessaries or on raw material. This has been frequently asserted, though consistently ignored by the other side.

There is no suggestion in the minds of any person with whom I have discussed the matter that unsound manufactures should be bolstered up artificially. It is not the purpose of Tariff Reform to remove foreign competition or to prevent imports. A duty of 10 per cent. or even 25 per cent. would not do that. The foreign imports are needed here, and it is obvious to the dullest intellect that if they were kept out a tariff on them would not benefit us.

What is asked is that foreign-made goods should help our revenues. At present they come in unrestricted, to the disadvantage of the home manufac-

turer, who has to bear his part in the national expenditure.

There are, of course, larger matters to consider, particularly the question of working with our Colonies and building up a great trade Empire.

We require a really "big" statesman to deal with such subjects. I have purposely kept to the plain issues, the facts in detail which a plain man can grasp; but I view with apprehension the fact that we do not see eye-to-eye with our Colonies, and that we can offer them no advantages in return for the advantages they have extended to us. Are they wrong, or are we? Do Britons become fools when they leave our shores? Let us in Heaven's name get together whilst there is yet time.

If our system is so much better than the others, let us give it up and get into line; we pride ourselves on our "sporting" spirit of not wanting any advantage over our competitors; and we shall be no worse off than they if we adopt their methods.

But there is a great difference between not wanting an advantage and always being under a handicap. Oh for a Joseph Chamberlain or a Disraeli! The latter prophesied long ago that Free Trade on our one-sided plan could only lead to an "awakening of bitterness."

In any case, let us as a commonsense nation keep this vital matter outside of politics, and at least give it a fair consideration.

TRADES UNIONISM

THE underlying principle on which Trades Unions came into being is excellent enough, and would have the support of every reasonable man. But, unfortunately, that principle has been left far behind, and labour organisation in its present form is, in my opinion (and that of most people with whom I have discussed the matter), one of the greatest problems, if not one of the greatest dangers, which will have to be faced in the near future.

Instead of being to-day in the interest of and for the protection of the workmen, the Trade Union is mainly political. Still worse, it is used as a vehicle for those extreme doctrines with which I am convinced the average working man is not in sympathy. Like our Parliament, it has become a political machine, and the extremists have too much voice in it.

The intelligent workman knows well enough that the doctrine of limiting output, of keeping all labour down to one level, and of promoting strikes which injure the trade of the whole country is, in the long run, calculated only to do him harm personally. He is not fool enough to think—as some people appear to imagine—that easy work and high wages are forthcoming from some unknown source if only he gets the voting power in his hands. He knows well enough that in its manufactures the nation has to compete with other nations, and that work driven away to Germany and America does not come back again. He knows also that if our conditions of labour over

here make our manufactures too expensive, other countries will get the orders—to his ultimate personal loss.

Most good workmen disagree with the idea that all, good and bad alike, should be paid a fixed rate. Why should not the clever, capable man be allowed to earn all he can? The average British workman, as I know him, is honest. He rightly wants to be paid fairly for what he does; but he also wants to do what he is paid for, to the best of his ability, and to give his employer a square deal. Often he has no sympathy whatever with the objects of a strike, or may rebel at the unfairness of a strike, but he has to fall in with the rest against his will. Has he no rights in the matter in such case? He may not desire to risk seeing his family suffering want.

The fact is that Trades Unions exercise a great tyranny over many workmen, as well as over many employers. This may be doubted by some unthinking people, but a little reflection will prove the truth of the contention. If the working classes were all of one mind in the matter, in view of the great preponderance of voting power possessed by them, would not all other parties have been swamped at the polls long ago?

Instead, we see the phenomenon of the two great parties, Radical and Unionist, practically equal in numbers, the party advocating Imperial policy and Tariff Reform being actually in the majority as regards votes, though not in power, and the Labour party pure and simple very limited in extent.

The tyranny I refer to is that of his own local public opinion. Take London, for instance. If a man disagrees with his fellows, say, in respect to a proposed

strike, it requires considerable courage to face day after day the jeers and taunts, if no worse, of his own particular neighbourhood.

He cannot move to Mayfair, or even Golder's Green, or any of the other districts where those reside who may be expected to agree with him. His "pub" in the evening is closed to him unless he wants continual arguments and an occasional fight on his hands. And so throughout the country; he must live amongst his own class. His only hope is that Parliament will prevent the rabid agitators from having too much power, and thus keep down the evil.

This is what Parliament has not done. I consider that the license allowed to strike organisers and agitators, and in particular the special encouragement given to them by some of our leaders, from whatever motive, constitute one of the greatest possible indictments in recent times against our political system.

Lloyd George, in making the assertion that "the right to strike is fundamental," must surely have known that such words, as understood by the ordinary person, could only constitute a direct encouragement of opposition to law and order. I admit the right to strike—if that means only that a man may refuse to do any particular work if he is not satisfied with the terms of payment. But it is idle to pretend that strikes, as we know them, merely mean so little. They mean, if anything, the intention to cause loss to a given set of employers, regardless of how much the rest of the community may lose or suffer as a consequence. In particular they mean the prevention—by force, if necessary—of any other workmen doing the work. Without the latter, all strikes are meaningless, and I challenge any honest man to deny it. That

it is so is practically admitted by the enactment *re* "peaceful picketing," which is a blot on our statute-book.

Peaceful picketing, forsooth! The workman knows well enough that it is never peaceful; that picketing, if it is peaceful, is a farce.

Why was it necessary to make a special law that Trades Unions could not be sued for any loss or damage caused by their acts? Why should Trades Unions be thus set outside the pale of the law, and be put in a different position from any other class or person in the community?

In plain English, strikes—as carried out amongst us—are nothing but mob law. In any other case of grievance or injustice, excepting that of labour, the only remedy is to seek the protection of the law. In a strike, whether of ten men or 100,000, a certain section take the law in their own hands to remedy their grievances, to the injury of the rest. Have the people whose businesses are injured—in some cases ruined—no "rights" to be considered?

The fact that strikes are caused sometimes by genuine hardships does not affect the main principle. The burglar's wife and family may be starving, and he may consider that he and they have a right to live; but the law does not take into account his reasons, or his excellent motives, if he takes the matter in his own hands, and helps himself to the property of others. He is punished notwithstanding. It is very hard on him; but it is the law. Unfortunately for him, he does not represent a large number of votes.

In all conditions of life the dominant factor is the law of supply and demand. If enough workmen

refrain from working at a particular factory where the wages or conditions are unjust, and if the employer concerned cannot obtain others to replace them, that employer will very justly suffer, and will soon be compelled automatically to amend his terms. It is, of course, very hard on the workers that there are always amongst us workers who want work, even at bad terms, and whilst that condition exists strikes are frankly futile, unless the so-called blacklegs can be terrorised into staying away too.

The only remedy is that there shall be plenty of work for all, then there will be no blacklegs for underpaid work. But what is ignored is that the blacklegs have the right to live also.

The universal strike so glibly talked of by agitators can only result in driving work away, thus making the conditions of labour gradually worse. The transport workers' strike, which brought London to the verge of a food famine not so long ago, could only end in civil war if pursued to its logical conclusion, as the people not concerned in it would have had to fight the strikers in order to get food. What is a Government for if not to prevent any one person or any one section, no matter how large, from injuring the others? Why have an organisation for preserving law and order if law-abiding citizens have to use force for their own preservation?

The recently discussed national strike of railway workers, for instance, can only mean that the railway men propose *by force* to gain certain advantages to themselves. They can only succeed by damaging those who are not railway men. If the latter do not submit tamely, but instead insist on carrying their goods and necessities by canal, by road or otherwise,

of what use is the railway strike?—unless, of course, the railway men arm themselves, to ensure that nothing shall be carried except by railway.

If it may be argued that force is not the foundation principle of strikers, I would quote Ben Tillett's speech (reported in *Birmingham Daily Mail*, September 15th, 1913), wherein he said: "Whenever the workers were on strike, he should advise them to arm themselves, be well drilled, and get the most murderous guns they could to protect themselves. He advised them to organise in peace times, and to learn to shoot straight."

Against whom are they to arm themselves? The forces of law and order. If there be any other "enemy," I have yet to learn of it.

The fatal defect in the system of strikes—even when peaceable in intention—is that they usually have no moral justification at all. If, say, a hundred men had been continuously employed in a particular business for many years, and by their industry had built up that business, one could sympathise with their dissatisfaction if the employer waxed fat whilst grinding them down. That particular hundred men would have some claim—however sentimental—in that particular business. But such a condition seldom, if ever, prevails. Workmen change their employment constantly, and the strike is usually commenced by a travelling agitator, or by employees who may not have been with the firm more than a few months.

It is significant that in Australia, with a Labour Government in power, strikes are illegal. All labour disputes have to be settled compulsorily by conciliation boards established for the purpose, and instigators of strikes are very heavily punished. No

more convincing comment in support of my contention is, I think, needed. Russia, Italy, Holland, Belgium, and Roumania prohibit under severe penalties strikes in those services which are necessary to the public, and Republican France, in the prompt dealing with her railway strike, has set us an example of practical commonsense.

Let the working classes see to it that their Unions are used for legitimate purposes, and they will benefit by them far more than at present. If the trade leaders recognise that it is in the interests of the workers themselves that output should not be limited, and that highly skilled labour should not be tied down to the level of the slow and lazy man, the working man will be infinitely better off than under the present shortsighted policy.

At present the policy is Protection at the wrong end, as if a body of men, having joint interest in a barrel of beer, protected the tap whilst allowing the beer to run away at the bung-hole. The first consideration is to ensure that the barrel be kept filled; the seeing that all share fairly is then easy.

TAXATION

OUR system of direct taxation shows, at least in the method of carrying it out, an absence of practical business-like handling, and, to me, it appears in several respects to be lacking also in justice.

No politician of recent times seems to have an idea beyond the income-tax, or to have the courage to attack any class but that which has already proved an easy prey. That a party professing economy should keep the income-tax at over 1s. in the £ permanently in time of peace was in itself sufficient evidence in support of this charge. But to raise it to 3s. 6d. to meet war expenses, without asking the working classes, who have admittedly in general been making more money out of the war than any other class, to bear a single penny, is a policy that cannot be defended or explained in any way, except by fear of losing votes.

The middle classes are hard hit in every direction—they possibly suffer most by the war—but because they are not organised like working men they must suffer and pay.

The working classes are just as dependent on good government as any other class. I would go farther and put it that they are more dependent. I believe that, in the main, they would be willing to bear their share of the national burden. I have always found the working man as patriotic, and very often as far seeing, as his betters in social position. Certainly, he is reasonable enough to be willing to pay for anything, provided its advantage to himself can be demonstrated.

I would like to see a system where all returns,

assessments, and so forth were entirely dispensed with, the special deductions for National Health Insurance being also discontinued. Instead, a fixed income-tax of 6d. in the £, which figure should be agreed as a maximum in time of peace, payable by everybody in receipt of wages above 19s. 6d. per week, the deduction being made in every case *at the time of payment*.

The effect of this would be not only to raise an incomparably larger sum, whilst relieving those of moderate income from an unjust disparity, but would have the further very desirable advantage of reducing the numbers of the huge horde of officials at present employed in collecting the tax—thus making it more remunerative to the national exchequer.

Naturally, many arguments can be brought forward showing the difficulties of such a scheme. But I have never yet heard one convincing argument as to its impossibility or against its desirability.

Difficulties were made to be overcome. Even the present scheme, with all its cumbersome procedure and costliness, does not provide against every case. There must be always certain exceptions, and these require handling in detail by business men who understand and know.

It will be noted that I have dealt with earned incomes and wages only. On all dividends and other profit payments, under the system suggested, the fixed rate of income-tax—which should be the same as for wages and salaries—would naturally be deducted at time of payment.

As to the profits of business houses, I suggest that in lieu of any kind of return, a payment of, say, 1d. in the £ *on turnover* would be a far better,

more equal, and more economically worked scheme. This would make the agent handling foreign-made goods from a small office, with possibly a solitary clerk as staff, pay in some cases equal to the manufacturer employing 500 hands and more. Such a tax could easily be collected, payment at regular intervals, not too far apart, being made at the nearest post office. In this connection, I would like to see every accountant fully qualified and officially appointed—the Government license fees from this source would help the national purse—and every business, no matter how small, compelled to keep books, the certificate of an auditor being accepted by the authorities.

In the case of professional men, whose income from fees would not come under either salary or turnover, a statutory declaration of the *previous* year's earnings would be sufficient.

As to super-tax, I would suggest that it should apply only to incomes—whether private, or the profits of firms, etc.—of £5,000 per annum and upwards. The department needed to deal specially with this would be a small one only, comparatively speaking, as the number of cases to be dealt with would be limited, and the tax, on account of its nature, would be easily collected, all likely cases being readily traceable.

It would involve too much detail to go farther into the matter than this. But I think most business men will be found to agree that such a scheme is practical, and that any objections to it can be easily dealt with by the exercise of a little practical commonsense. At present, the worry of furnishing complicated returns of profits or income that may possibly not be received, the inquisitorial and arbitrary powers of surveyors and other officials, and particularly in the case of professional

men and others of moderate means having to find what is usually a very crippling sum once a year, are serious blots on our system, quite apart from its undoubted costliness. If nothing else, the reduction in the number of the ever-growing class of State officials would alone be sufficient advantage to justify the change.

The taxation of manufactured imports, a subject dealt with separately in another chapter, should provide the main part of our Imperial revenue. But in addition to this there are many obvious sources of income which appear to have been neglected up to the present for some obscure reason. Why should not agents and travellers representing foreign manufacturers and producers contribute directly? They find the country a lucrative market, and the privilege should certainly be paid for.

Foreign ships using British ports might also reasonably bear special charges over and above British ships.

Above all, why should co-operative societies, with their millions of turnover, be exempt from direct taxation? To the average man, who has to bear his share, whose business is in many instances seriously affected by these societies, nothing more unjust and more in the nature of pandering to a particular class for the sake of its votes can possibly be conceived.

THE PEOPLE'S FOOD

I DO not propose to venture amongst the many questions relating to the land or agriculture—which are beyond the grasp of an ordinary man, in view of the multitude of divergent theories existing already.

But I do think that the safeguarding of the national food supply, and the national food, are very vital matters which ought not to be neglected.

I do not ignore that something is being done. In view of the war our leaders have done well and wisely, up to a certain extent, in purchasing wheat and so forth. But the fact that, as a nation, we produce roughly somewhere about 25 per cent. of our own supplies, going abroad for the remaining 75 per cent. of our food, is disquieting. I accept the statement of experts that it is not possible with our available acreage to be entirely self-supporting, but if we were only able to produce two-thirds, it is obvious that it would take longer to starve us out than would be the case at present.

If it is contended that State assistance and encouragement of agriculture, State granaries, and co-operation in respect to eggs and other dairy products, are Socialistic in tendency, then let us be Socialistic to that extent. I have no objection to any of the principles of Socialism that may be practicable and for the general good.

Such questions as the best means of distributing agricultural produce to make its cultivation profitable, the institution of land banks, education *re* intensive culture, the encouragement of small ownerships, and

the many problems of similar kind should be kept away from party politics. The issues involved are too important for the nation's future.

It is not good, even to a townsman, to know that the land is often not cultivated, because "it does not pay"—that the plain, wholesome country fare which built up sturdy yeomen is being replaced, even in our villages, by tinned food, eggs from Norway and China, cheese from America, butter from Denmark. We want good food for workers, and we want a race of workers on the land, as well as town workers.

The question of food adulteration is equally vital. Take bread alone. The mistaken craze for whiteness has made the American steam-rollered flour universal. I submit there is not the same nourishment in it as in the old-fashioned "country" flour stone-milled. The consequence is a prevalence of rickets, defective teeth, etc., among the children of the poor, whose staple diet is bread.

It is unfortunate, in a way, that the subject was taken up some time back by a very widely read and popular journal, as the papers of opposite politics promptly took up an opposite view and scoffed the subject down. That action was to their discredit.

The French, always practical, have made it compulsory that all bread shall be composed of 80 per cent. wheat (which, of course, is what was meant by "standard bread"), and they are not likely to allow a very vital reform to be killed—as it was with us—by unscrupulous bakers continuing to use the impoverished white American flour, and darkening the loaf with grain siftings or offal to give it the appearance of genuine "standard bread."

There is good work for our legislators in connection with such matters.

AT THE END OF THE WAR

“**N**EVER again !”

That issue at least is plain and clear, and, despite the efforts of a certain band in our midst, it is accepted universally. If anything else were possible it would be hopeless to discuss the future of Britain among the nations. To throw away the flower of manhood, the millions of expenditure, the sacrifices we have made, for just nothing, with the prospect of having to go through it all again before very long, is a proposal which can only emanate from traitors or those of weak intellect.

Whether the precious band who are already industriously raising the cry, “Don’t humiliate Germany,” are merely unconscious mouthpieces of the enemy or not, is of such little account that the point is not worth discussion.

Germany must be humiliated. The very fact of being beaten to her knees, and forced to agree to terms which will not only provide for her paying as far as possible for what she has done, but which will also ensure that she shall not have power to do it again for at least another hundred years, will be quite sufficient humiliation in itself for a proud, bully nation that set out to beat the world.

We Britons are not petty or revengeful. There is no suggestion that we invade Germany and inflict on her non-combatants what she inflicted on Belgium or Serbia. We do not desire to impale any German babies, outrage or shoot any German women, or destroy German cathedrals or other cherished monuments.

We are quite prepared that Germany shall be allowed to trade peaceably, and to gradually build herself up again, by good conduct, until she can take her place amongst the civilised nations. There is no suggestion that she shall not be allowed to live and grow, whilst she acts as a civilised nation.

The suggestion which has been made in some quarters that no German-made goods of any kind shall be purchased by us after the war, is obviously the outcome of very natural resentment and a certain lack of adequate consideration, and I do not think that it will be seriously maintained. Of course, we shall buy German-made goods after the war, and trade with Germany. How else can she pay us an indemnity if we do not? But the trading must be on fair terms, and we must not be at a disadvantage as in the past. Germany must be at the disadvantage as compared with our Colonies and our faithful Allies; and Germany must pay for the privilege of trading with us. She will be only too glad to.

With a square and honourable opponent, when the fight is done, a good feeling may prevail—but not so with Germany. Her methods of fighting have been so bestial that the respect due to a doughty enemy is impossible in her case. Above all, she has proved, beyond possibility of question, that her word cannot be accepted. Therefore, the absurd sentiment which has characterised so many of our actions in this war, and which is being actively conjured up on Germany's behalf, must gain no foothold among us now.

One magnificent thing at least has been done by our leaders as a set-off against so many things left undone, *i.e.*, the compact with our Allies that no terms of peace will be entered into except jointly.

France, Russia, and Italy are not likely to suffer from silly sentiment or lack of commonsense in providing against the future. Their leaders appreciate to the full the immense secret influence possessed by Germany as the result of her scheming before the war. They will not allow naturalised financiers or their impractical dupes to interfere, or to prevent full justice being obtained, whether the interference be prompted by love of country or by mere desire for gain.

The war may, of course, go on for several more years ; in fact, as this is written, the military situation would point to it. On the other hand, it may collapse very soon. Many hold the view that the end will be as dramatic in suddenness as the start. Are we prepared for either contingency, or shall we be caught napping in trade as we were in our military preparations ?

Is it fully appreciated by our legal-minded leaders that in Germany there are millions of pounds' worth of manufactured goods that are only waiting for the seas to be free before being dumped amongst us ?

In order to raise the ready cash that is needed by Germany in order to resume trading and manufacture, these goods will be sold at what they will fetch, irrespective of manufacturing cost. They in many cases represent all that is left to banks as security for loans, and to merchants and manufacturers otherwise ruined by the war.

Has any provision been made yet against that inevitable dumping which may easily ruin many British traders and manufacturers ? How about the thousands of our factories at present devoted entirely to the production of munitions and other necessities of the war ?

Are they to be given any time in order to get back again into their own particular lines of business, or will they be just dropped when the nation requires their services no longer? Will the welfare of the British workers who have so loyally done their bit during the war be safeguarded in any way against foreign competition?

Are we preparing in advance to get vital industries into our hands, instead of depending in future on the Germans? How about the dye industry? And shall we continue to send the finest steel in the world, in the form of Sheffield razors, to be ground in Germany?

Has any provision been made yet to protect the British shipping industry? What about the German and Austrian vessels lying interned throughout the world, particularly in America? Are these to be used for aiding German trade, whilst so many of the British ships so vital to our own trade are lying at the bottom of the sea through German mine or torpedo?

There are many of us who are asking these and similar questions with considerable apprehension.

IN CONCLUSION

LEST it may seem that this is just the ordinary British "grouse" at everything in general, or a pessimist expression of discontent with my native land and its institutions, I would like to emphasise the fact that throughout I have not advocated one single change of a drastic nature. I believe that the British constitution as a whole is the finest in the world, and that the British Empire—if we but exercise a little more thought and bestir ourselves from our national defect of thinking, "It will come out all right—why worry?"—is destined to play the greatest part in the world's history for many generations to come.

The purpose of this small effort—a penny trumpet in the wilderness compared with the clarion call of some really great man who will no doubt take up the parable before long—is to set thinking such few of my countrymen as I may have the luck to reach, and possibly stir abler intellects to the task of representing the average Briton, the man-in-the-street, more adequately than at present.

We have had the luck to escape the worst consequences of our national apathy. We might have had to fight the Germans single-handed; we might have had no Kitchener to achieve the seemingly impossible by creating an army in face of the enemy. But it is not wise to always depend on luck, and I want to see our Empire take, *and keep*, its rightful place by remaining awake, and not relapsing back into comfortable, easy-going mental sloth. When the war is over, the fight for future supremacy will begin, and the same

careful, unscrupulous organisation, the same deadly singleness of purpose, the same craft and low cunning which has been exercised against us in the field will have to be met in the markets and in the diplomacy of the world.

I have carped at politicians, because there has been in the past too much politics and too little of patriotism among them. I do not ignore the fact that many who were at fault in this respect before the war have risen higher in face of the national danger, and have done splendid work since.

Churchill had the Fleet ready, an act of statesmanship which should always be remembered by his countrymen as a set-off to mistakes ; Lloyd George has achieved wonders in organising the production of munitions, and his whole-souled devotion to the nation's interests, self-effacement, and absence of oratory of any kind have gone far to remove from the minds of many the memory of his demagogue days. Many others have done equally well. Ben Tillett has done good patriotic work in connection with recruiting, using his undoubted talent and his great influence with the workers to the nation's benefit instead of to its detriment. Our Premier, under the prevailing excitement, has made at least three clear, definite pronouncements, not capable of being twisted into an opposite meaning later on, and understandable of the meanest intelligence.

We are all devoutly hoping that the one stating what our objects were before "sheathing the sword" will be adhered to in fullest measure. The others, unfortunately, are not on the same high moral plane ; one being to the effect that removal of himself and colleagues from power would constitute a national disaster ; the other stating his fixed determination not to forgo

his salary in any way. These latter are statements which may commend themselves more to the author of them than to other people. But the change is heartily to be welcomed. We at least have a plain issue before us.

To be fair to the party which has always displayed national spirit in great emergencies, I would quote the speech of Lord Curzon (as reported in the *Daily Mail*) of April 3rd, 1913:—

“In the House of Lords I suggested that the safety, honour, and welfare of His Majesty’s Dominions being at stake, this was a matter in which the leaders of the two parties might very well confer, and, if possible, act together. (Cheers.) I suggested that the opinions of military and naval authorities might be placed before them, and that a common policy might be evolved. That was no random suggestion. It was made with the full knowledge and approval of the two leaders of our party—Lord Lansdowne and Mr. Bonar Law. (Cheers.)

It was a bona-fide offer. There was no arrière-pensée. It was put forward in the interests and security of the nation, which we have got just as great a right to have a claim to defend as have the members or supporters of the Government.

“What reception did that suggestion meet with? No notice was taken of it, no reply was given. It was overwhelmed with ridicule by the Radical organs of the baser sort, who manufactured out of it a grotesque travesty, the monstrous misrepresentation that we who hold these views want to have a great Continental Army of a million men, fashioned on the model of Germany and France, with which to go gasconading about the

Continent and plunging into all sorts of foreign adventures.

"It is not a parody, it is not a caricature, it is a monstrous perversion of anything we have said or anything we think. I will not go into that. I repeat the question now: Why cannot we confer on this matter, so vital to us all? Why cannot it be shown that, if foreign affairs can be taken out of the quagmire of party, if India can be taken out—good heavens, why cannot the defence of the country be taken out? (Applause.) It makes one almost cry with despair to think that when the question of national existence is involved, many people should be thinking only how they can injure their political opponents and derive some political advantage at the polls."

It is a sad commentary on our political methods that such a speech should fall on unheeding ears.

I have purposely avoided reference to such matters as Antwerp, Gallipoli, or Mesopotamia. I understand that mistakes are inseparable from any war, especially when entered on under such circumstances as this nation has had to face.

The spirit of the people has been great—in disaster especially so. Such ghastly exceptions as the strikes of the Welsh miners and the Clyde workers do not affect the matter, as, thank Heaven, they represent a very limited minority only, a leaven from which the finest nation cannot hope to be entirely free.

I want that spirit thus brought into renewed life by the war—the spirit which I contend is the true British spirit—to remain in force in the future among leaders and people alike. Our ideals and our system are good enough, if we only try to live up to them. There are

many among our legislators who regret the defects of party politics, and who long for a better state of affairs. Let such speak out boldly, and they will find support enough.

No doubt the views I have expressed, crude as they are, will offend many estimable people. I make every allowance for well-meaning faddists. But every man of the world knows that much more harm is caused in actual results by well-meaning but mistaken people than by the actively ill-intentioned. The destinies of a great nation cannot be left in the hands of narrow-minded bigots who can see nothing but their own pet fad.

The working classes may sometimes long for more drastic changes; certainly at the first blush, feeling that their lot is hard enough already, they will disagree with the suggestion that they should contribute directly to Imperial revenue. To them, as one fully sympathising with them and knowing their difficulties, and more than keenly desirous that they should obtain all possible improvement, I would say that the present system, if well carried out, with some of the anomalies removed, is most likely to show them the best results in the long run.

The British working man and woman in the main are clear-thinking and logical. They know that ideal conditions can never be hoped for, despite the honeyed words of those professing Socialism, Syndicalism, and other ideas which are splendid enough in theory, but, owing to the inherent and unalterable defects of human nature, hopeless in practice. That there has been even so much hearkening to those impossible theories is only proof to my mind of the general feeling which I have endeavoured to illustrate on these pages.

In a really well-governed Britain, guided by great men actuated by patriotic motives only—Britain for the British, and British interests and those of her friends first—the working man would benefit most of all from the general all-round prosperity that is bound to prevail. He would be far better off, even if contributing to the revenue, with plenty of work about, and with the good wages which are the certain accompaniment of plenty of work. It is in his interest to be a good citizen, and to see that the law is upheld without discrimination for any class—even his own—and I believe he knows it.

On vital points there is nothing wrong with the British spirit. It is as sound at the core and as sturdy as ever. Because, through a period of peace and prosperity, it has become to some extent dormant, our enemies abroad and false friends at home would be unwise to trade on the idea that it is dead, or even weaker than it used to be.

On the first serious call it has arisen, brushing away at a stroke the cobwebs of apathy, apparent sloth, and neglect of national ideals. It would be wise on the part of some of our too-partisan legislators, if they desire to retain their posts, to recognise that awakening, and to bear in mind that, once aroused, it may not be content with merely carrying a great war to the bitter end. Those of them who are national cobwebs can be so easily brushed away, too.

My desire is that the cobwebs should not gather again, but that the national spirit be kept bright and always ready for use.